November

WRNY

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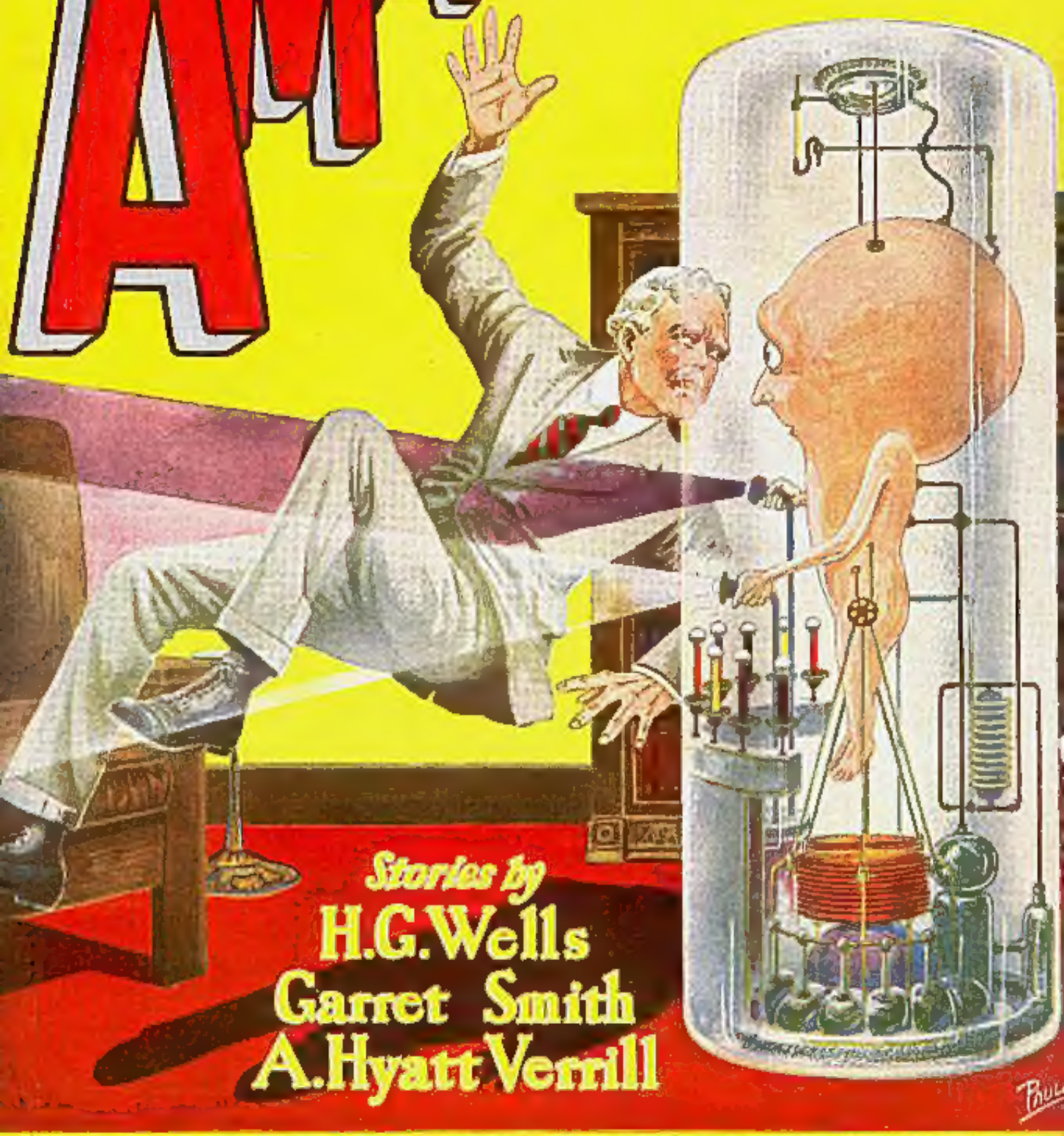
AMAZING STORIES

HUGO GERNSBACK
EDITOR



Stories by
H.G. Wells
Garret Smith
A. Hyatt Verrill

EXPERIMENTER PUBLISHING COMPANY, NEW YORK, PUBLISHERS OF
RADIO NEWS - RADIO LISTENERS' GUIDE - SPARE-TIME MONEY MAKING - FRENCH HUMOR - SCIENCE & INVENTION

30 DAYS FREE TRIAL

Battery or
All-Electric
OPERATION

HERE is the great value offer of the day. Test and try this powerful seven-tube RANDOLPH RADIO for thirty days. After it **brings in stations from coast to coast** with amazing clearness—**with easy one-dial tuning**—after it **easily equals any other radio** regardless of cost—after you are more than satisfied then you can buy it **direct at factory prices. Every RANDOLPH must make good before it is sold.**

The RANDOLPH SEVEN-TUBE CONSOLE illustrated here can be had for use with batteries or **connected direct to the electric light socket—absolutely batteryless—no batteries, chargers or acids—just plug in and tune in.** 100% efficient either way. Its construction and performance have been tested and approved by leading radio engineers and authorities—by leading radio publications and laboratories.

7 Tubes—Single Control
Illuminated Drum

One drum dial operated by one simple vernier control tunes in all stations with easy selectivity to tremendous volume. No overlapping of stations. Illuminated drum permits operation in the dark. Volume control for finer volume modulation. This is a seven-tube tuned radio frequency receiver with power transformers and power amplification. Space wound solenoid coils. Full and completely shielded. A real receiver of the highest quality. Tremendous distance, wonderful tone quality, simple to operate.

Beautiful Walnut Console
Built-in Cone Speaker

The Randolph Seven-tube Ampliphonic Console illustrated above is housed in a genuine burl-walnut cabinet with two-tone hand rubbed finish giving it unsurpassed beauty. The same expert cabinet work has gone into the making of these consoles as in the finest furniture. Has **built-in cone loud speaker that compares with any on the market.** Accurately reproduces complete range of musical notes from the highest to the lowest pitch.

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I have logged more than 50 stations from coast to coast.—Lloyd Davenport, Littlefield, Texas. I have logged 52 stations from Cuba to Seattle, the set is a world beater.—J. Tampkinson, Detroit, Mich. Your set is a revelation, has all others tied to the post for distance and selectivity.—Waldo Powers, Vergennes, Vermont. On strength of its performance sold two more sets this week.—T. Scanlow, Orlando, Florida.

The Randolph 7-Tube Console Single Control RETAIL PRICE Completely Assembled $99

The Senior Six

Now you can have a new, modern, single-control, six-tube radio. Do not compare this set with old style 2-dial 6-tube sets selling for about the same price. The Randolph 1928 Senior Six has also been tested and approved by the leading radio engineers. Comes in a beautiful solid walnut cabinet of hand-rubbed finish. Single control. Illuminated Drum with space for logging. Absolutely dependable and very selective. **Sent 30 Days' Free Trial. You test before you buy.**

6-Tube $55 Retail Price Single Control

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The Randolph Radio Corporation are pioneers in the manufacture of radios. All of its vast and unlimited resources have been used in making and perfecting of the Randolph Receivers. Because of our long and successful experience in the radio business, we are perfectly confident in sending out a Randolph Radio on trial. We know what it will do. Mail us the coupon now for the greatest radio offer ever made.

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Work either full or part time and make big money. Tremendous advertising campaign helps you sell. Regardless of whether you have ever sold before, be sure to get our proposition. The Randolph sells on first demonstration. Men and women both can make money this easy way. Get your demonstration set for thirty day's FREE TRIAL.

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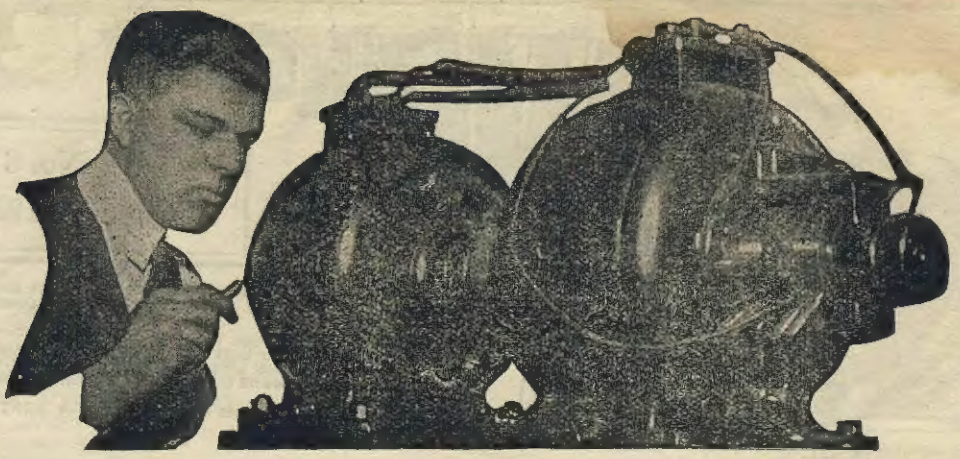
Address.....

City..... State...

Mark here ☐ if interested in Agent's proposition

RANDOLPH RADIO CORPORATION
Lake Street Dept. 239, Chicago, Illinois



Amazingly Easy Way to get into ELECTRICITY

Don't spend your life waiting for $5 raises in a dull, hopeless job. Now . . . and forever . . . say good-bye to 25 and 35 dollars a week. Let me show you how to qualify for jobs leading to salaries of $50, $60 and up, a week, in Electricity—NOT by correspondence, but by an amazing way to teach, that makes you a practical expert in 90 days! Getting into Electricity is far easier than you imagine!

Learn Without Lessons in 90 DAYS

LACK of experience—age, or advanced education bars no one. I don't care if you don't know an armature from an air brake—I don't expect you to! I don't care if you're 16 years old or 40—it makes no difference! Don't let lack of money stop you. Most of the men at Coyne have no more money than you have.

Many Earn While Learning

Many of my students earn a good part or all of their expenses and should you need this assistance we will help you. Then, in 12 brief weeks, in the great roaring shops of Coyne, I train you as you never dreamed you could be trained . . . on the greatest outlay of electrical apparatus ever assembled . . . costing hundreds of thousands of dollars . . . real dynamos, engines, power plants, autos, switchboards, transmitting stations . . . everything from doorbells . . . farm power and lighting . . . full . . . d . . . in full operation every

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Here are a few of hundreds of positions open to Coyne-trained men. Our free employment bureau gives you lifetime employment service.

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$60 a Week and up
Inventor - - Unlimited
Manitenance Engineer
$60 a Week and up
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$60 a Week and up
Radio Expert, $60 a Week and up

real actual work . . . building real batteries . . . winding real armatures, operating real motors, dynamos and generators, wiring houses, etc., etc. That's a glimpse of how we make you a master practical electrician in 90 days, teaching you far more than the average ordinary electrician ever knows and fitting you to step into jobs leading to big pay immediately after graduation. Here, in this world-famous *Parent school* —and nowhere else in the world—can you get such training!

Jobs, Pay, Future

Don't worry about a job, Coyne training settles the job question for life. Demand for Coyne men often exceeds the supply. Our employment bureau gives you lifetime service. Two weeks after graduation, Clyde F. Hart got a position as electrician with the Great Western Railroad at over $100 a week. That's not unusual. We can point to Coyne men making up to $600 a month. Coyne men get positions which lead to salaries of $50.00, $60.00 and up a week. You can go into radio, battery or automotive electrical business for yourself and make *from $3000 a year up.*

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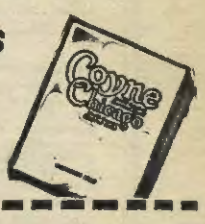
Coyne is your one great chance to get into electricity. Every obstacle is removed. This school is 28 years old—Coyne training is tested—proven beyond all doubt—endorsed by many large electrical concerns. You can find out everything absolutely free. Simply mail the coupon and let me send you the big, free Coyne book of 150 photographs . . . facts . . . jobs . . . salaries . . . opportunities. Tells you how many earn expenses while training and how we assist our graduates in the field. This does not obligate you. So act at once. Just mail coupon.

Get this FREE Book



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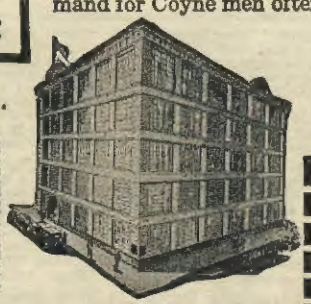

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AMAZING STORIES

Vol. 2 No. 8
November, 1927

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MONEY MAKING, FRENCH HUMOR

Owners of Broadcast Station WRNY

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Our Cover

This month represents the scene from "The Machine Man of Ardathia," by Francis Flagg, showing what, according to this author, will be the evolution of man 35,000 years hence. With the aid of his array of tubes, this strange being talks, feeds himself and travels. These rays are the only things that will penetrate the glass-like substance in which these beings live. The illustration shows "the machine man" of the future demonstrating his powers—the rays grip a man and hold him suspended in the air for several minutes—making a fine substitution for human hands and arms.

In Our Next Issue:

ROBUR THE CONQUEROR, by Jules Verne. (A Serial in 2 Parts) Part I. Fulfilling the promise to our readers regarding publication of Jules Verne's stories, we shall present, in the next issue, "Robur the Conqueror," a story not as well known as many of the other works of this author. Written long before the invention of the airplane, Verne's picture is that of an excellent aerial machine, a machine that has not even today been fully approached. Excellent science, mixed with fine adventure or travel, makes this story an outstanding one that we know you will like.

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND, by H. G. Wells. Here is one of the most unusual stories that you could wish for. As is usual, also, with Mr. H. G. Wells, he again springs a surprise. He takes a more or less innocent subject and manages to make something quite extraordinary out of it. You will like this story.

HICKS' INVENTIONS WITH A KICK (The Hicks Electro-Hydraulic Bank Protector), by Henry Hugh Simmons. Being a true inventive genius, he is undaunted, and Hicks bobs up again with a more marvellous invention than ever. This time it is a contrivance for the absolute protection of banks against any and all robbers.

THE FOURTEENTH EARTH, by Walter Kateley. Scientists have steadfastly maintained that there must be other inhabited planes besides our own. This author has woven a charming tale around his idea where such planes might be.

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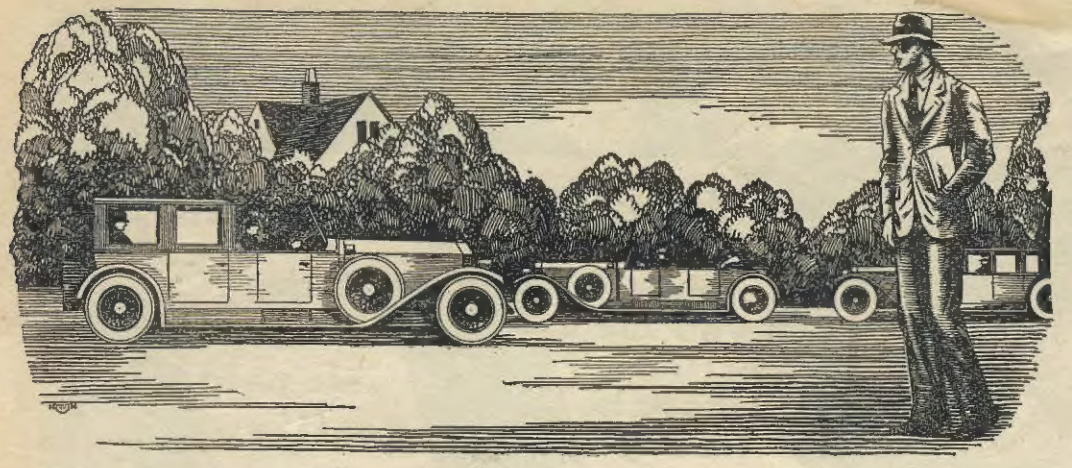

Many times in the old days, while I trudged home after work to save carfare, I used to gaze enviously at the shining cars gliding by me, the prosperous men and women within. Little did I think that inside of a year, I, too, should have my own car, a decent bank account, the good things of life that make it worth living.

I Thought Success Was For Others

Believe It Or Not, Just Twelve Months Ago I Was Next Thing To "Down-and-Out"

TODAY I'm sole owner of the fastest growing Radio store in town. And I'm on good terms with my banker, too—not like the old days only a year ago, when often I didn't have one dollar to knock against another in my pocket. My wife and I live in the snuggest little home you ever saw, right in one of the best neighborhoods. And to think that a year ago I used to dodge the landlady when she came to collect the rent for the little bedroom I called "home"!

It all seems like a dream now, as I look back over the past twelve short months, and think how discouraged I was then, at the "end of a blind alley." I thought I never had had a good chance in my life, and I thought I never would have one. But it was waking up that I needed, and here's the story of how I got it.

I WAS a clerk, working at the usual miserable salary such jobs pay. Somehow I'd never found any way to get into a line where I could make good money.

Other fellows seemed to find opportunities. But—much as I wanted the good things that go with success and a decent income—all the really well-paid vacancies I ever heard of seemed to be out of my line—to call for some kind of knowledge I didn't have.

And I wanted to get married. A fine situation, wasn't it? Mary would have agreed to try it—but it wouldn't have been fair to her.

Mary had told me, "You can't get ahead where you are. Why don't you get into another line of work, somewhere that you can advance?"

"That's fine, Mary," I replied, "but *what* line? I've always got my eyes open for a better job, but I never seem to hear of a really good job that I can handle." Mary didn't seem to be satisfied with the answer, but I didn't know what else to tell her.

It was on the way home that night that I stopped off in the neighborhood drug store, where I overheard a scrap of conversation about myself. A few burning words that were the cause of the turning point in my life!

With a hot flush of shame I turned and left the store, and walked rapidly home. So that was what my neighbors—the people who knew me best—really thought of me!

"Bargain counter sheik—look how that suit fits," one fellow had said in a low voice. "Bet he hasn't got a dollar in those pockets." "Oh, it's just 'Useless' Anderson," said another. "He's got a wish-bone where his backbone ought to be."

As I thought over the words in deep humiliation, a sudden thought made me catch my breath. Why had Mary been so dissatisfied with my answer that "I hadn't had a chance?" *Did Mary secretly think that too?* And after all, wasn't it *true* that I had a "wish-bone" where my back-bone ought to be? Wasn't that why I never had a "chance" to get ahead? It was true, only too true—and it had taken this cruel blow to my self-esteem to make me see it.

With a new determination I thumbed the pages of a magazine on the table, searching for an advertisement that I'd seen many times but passed up without thinking, an advertisement telling of big opportunities for trained men to succeed in the great new Radio field. With the advertisement was a coupon offering a big free book full of information. I sent the coupon in, and in a few days received a handsome 64-page book, printed in two colors, telling all about the opportunities in the radio field and how a man can prepare quickly and easily at home to take advantage of these opportunities. I read the book carefully, and when I finished it I made my decision.

WHAT'S happened in the twelve months since that day, as I've already told you, seems almost like a dream to me now. For ten of those twelve months, *I've had a Radio business of my own!* At first, of course, I started it as a little proposition on the side, under the guidance of the National Radio Institute, the outfit that gave me my Radio training. It wasn't long before I was getting so much to do in the Radio line that I quit my measly little clerical job, and devoted my full time to my Radio business.

Since that time I've gone right on up, always under the watchful guidance of my friends at the National Radio Institute. They would have given me just as much help, too, if I had wanted to follow some other line of Radio besides building my own retail business—such as broadcasting, manufacturing, experimenting, sea operating, or any one of the score of lines they prepare you for. And to think that until that day I sent for their eye-opening book, I'd been wailing "I never had a chance!"

NOW I'm making real money. I drive a good-looking car of my own. Mary and I don't own the house in full yet, but I've made a substantial down payment, and I'm not straining myself any to meet the installments.

Here's a real tip. You may not be as bad off as I was. But, think it over—are you satisfied? Are you making enough money, at work that you like? Would you sign a contract to stay where you are now for the next ten years, making the same money? If not, you'd better be *doing* something about it instead of drifting.

This new Radio game is a live-wire field of golden rewards. The work, in any of the 20 different lines of Radio, is fascinating, absorbing, well paid. The National Radio Institute—oldest and largest Radio home-study school in the world—will train you inexpensively in your own home to know Radio from A to Z and to increase your earnings in the Radio field.

Take another tip—No matter what your plans are, no matter how much or how little you know about Radio—clip the coupon below and look their free book over. It is filled with interesting facts, figures, and photos, and the information it will give you is worth a few minutes of anybody's time. You will place yourself under no obligation—the book is free, and is gladly sent to anyone who wants to know about Radio. Just address J. E. Smith, President, National Radio Institute, Dept. O-5, Washington, D. C.

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National Radio Institute,
Dept. O-5, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith:

Please send me your 64-page free book, printed in two colors, giving all information about the opportunities in Radio and how I can learn quickly and easily at home to take advantage of them. I understand this request places me under no obligation, and that no salesmen will call on me.

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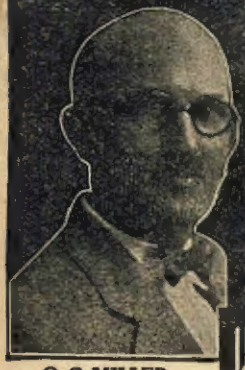

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Director Extension Work

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O C Miller

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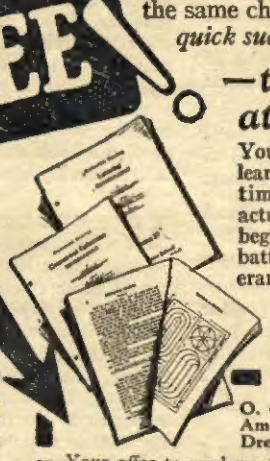

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Occupation ..... *Age*.....

VOLUME 2

AMAZING STORIES

THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENTIFICTION

November, 1927
No. 8

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SPACE FLYING

By HUGO GERNSBACK

EVER since time immemorial, the human mind has taken wings and soared out into free space among the planets and the stars. Scientifiction writers of note have always taken with avidity to this fascinating subject, while some of the greatest minds have occupied themselves with the problem of space flying. Since the advent of the airplane, many schemes have been proposed to launch a space flyer* by which it would be possible to negotiate the distance between the earth and the moon, and then from the earth to the various planets. Many schemes have been proposed for space flying, and some of the more recent ones, notably the Goddard Rocket Flyer, seem to come closest toward a strictly scientific solution of the problem.

Let us now make a general survey of the possibilities of space flying in the light of present-day science. If it becomes possible to navigate a space flyer outside of the terrestrial atmosphere, even if only to such a comparatively near body as the moon, then immediately an important popular conception becomes a certain impossibility. I refer to the present inhabitation of reasoning beings on other planets, at least of our own universe.

The reason is simple. If we can navigate a space flyer, let us say, to Mars or Venus, then it may be assumed that none of the planets is now peopled by reasoning, intelligent beings.

This theoretical reasoning is elementary, simply because, if *we* do the thing first, we are probably the only reasoning beings in our own universe, otherwise older civilizations would undoubtedly have visited us first. There is a reservation to this in the case of Mars and of the moon. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that were Mars or the moon inhabited by highly intelligent beings, they might have tried a landing on earth long before the earth had become habitable for other intelligent beings. If a landing had been tried, the reconnoitering party in their space flyers would probably have had to turn back, because the shores of the earth several million years ago were probably unfit to set foot upon. Thus it is quite possible that if intelligent beings existed on the moon or Mars, they have had to return to their own abode, where their race finally died out.

If this were the case, traces of their civilization would very likely be found by the first space flying party that set foot on either the moon or Mars. This reasoning is analogous to that concerning the cycle through which the earth is passing now. If, for instance, we were to try to make a landing on either Jupiter or Saturn today, we would find that it was impossible, because these planets are still in a semi-plastic state, which, of course, would make them impossible to live on. These planets and a number of others are thus in the same condition as the earth was millions of years ago and they are slowly cooling and solidifying.

Next we come to some other important considerations. There is a chance that Mars, and indeed, other planets belonging to other parts of our universe, may be peopled with beings of intelligence far higher than our own. They may have space flyers, and yet may be prevented from visiting our earth, for the following reasons:

It is one thing to construct a practical space flyer which fits many conditions theoretically, but it is another thing altogether to navigate it successfully in space. An analogy to this might be found in the present achieved state of the airplane. It is theoretically possible to fly an airplane across any of our oceans, but for practical reasons, it is a tremendous risk and will remain so for some years. In space flying, however, we have obstacles that may never be overcome, and which make the attempt so hazardous that it becomes folly to attempt it.

It is well known today that the space between our heavenly bodies is not just one great and empty vacuum. Quite the contrary, it is pretty much alive with meteors and other small bodies that constantly hurtle through space at tremendous speeds. Nor are these meteors infrequent. It is known that their distribution is rather dense, and it may be doubted whether a space flyer could be sent from the earth to the moon without encountering dozens of such celestial projectiles, traveling at speeds of as high as four miles per second, which would annihilate anything with which they came in contact.

We are fortunate that our earth possesses an atmosphere, because the meteors entering the upper strata of our gaseous envelope are ignited by the friction and usually are reduced to dust before they travel very far. This meteoric dust settles upon the earth gradually.

Out in free space, where there is no atmosphere, no such protection exists. The space flyer would probably not know of his impending fate, until one of these bodies was immediately upon him; and then it would be too late. There is a chance that some instruments might be invented with which to ascertain the approach of a meteor while it is still thousands of miles away. Thus its course could be plotted quickly enough by some electrical means, perhaps by using high vacuum tube amplification, and so possibly enable the space flyer to steer away quickly enough. If there are too many, as is most likely the case, then even with such protection it would certainly be impossible to dodge all the meteorites at all times.

Furthermore, another danger of which we know little as yet, is the newly discovered Milliken Cosmic Ray. We know that these rays abound in open space, to a much greater extent than on earth. What these rays are capable of doing to the space flyer, has not yet been ascertained. It may be that the forces of this cosmic ray are such that it would prevent a space flyer travelling any distance at all.

**The term "Space-Flyer" was first used by the author in his story "Ralph 124C41+," published in 1911.*

A STORY OF THE STONE AGE

by H. G. Wells

Author of "War of the Worlds," "The Time Machine," etc.

. . . In another moment he was hanging to its back half buried in fur, with one fist clutched in the hair under its jaw. The bear was too astonished at this fantastic attack to do more than cling passively. And then the axe, the first of all axes, rang on its skull.

CHAPTER I

Ugh-lomi and Uya

THIS story is of a time beyond the memory of man, before the beginning of history, a time when one might have walked dryshod from France (as we call it now) to England, and when a broad and sluggish Thames flowed through its marshes to meet its father Rhine, flowing through a wide and level country that is under water in these latter days, and which we know by the name of the North Sea. In that remote age the valley which runs along the foot of the Downs did not exist, and the south of Surrey was a range of hills, fir-clad on the middle slopes, and snow-capped for the better part of the year. The cores of its summits still remain as Leith Hill, and Pitch Hill, and Hindhead. On the lower slopes of the range, below the grassy spaces where the wild horses grazed, were forests of yew and sweet-chestnut and elm, and the thickets and dark places hid the grizzly bear and the hyæna, and the grey apes clambered through the branches. And still lower amidst the woodland and marsh and open grass along the Wey did this little drama play itself out to the end that I have to tell. Fifty thousand years ago it was, fifty thousand years—if the reckoning of geologists is correct.

And in those days the spring-time was as joyful as it is now, and sent the blood coursing in just the same fashion. The afternoon sky was blue with piled white clouds sailing through it, and the south-west wind came like a soft caress. The new-come swallows drove to and fro. The reaches of the river were spangled with white ranunculus, the marshy places were starred with lady's-smock and lit with marshmallow wherever the regiments of the sedges lowered their swords, and the northward moving hippopotami, shiny black monsters, sporting clumsily, came floundering and blundering through it all, rejoicing dimly and possessed with one clear idea, to splash the river muddy.

Up the river and well in sight of the hippopotami, a number of the little buff-coloured animals dabbed in the water. There was no fear, no rivalry, and no enmity between them and the hippopotami. As the great bulks came crashing through the reeds and smashed the mirror of the water into silvery splashes, these little creatures shouted and gesticulated with glee. It was the surest sign of high spring. "Boloo!" they cried. "Baayah. Boloo!" They were the children of the men folk, the smoke of whose encampment rose from the knoll at the river's bend. Wild-eyed youngsters they were, with matted hair and little broad-nosed impish faces, covered (as some children are covered even nowadays) with a delicate down of hair. They were narrow in the loins and long in the arms. And their ears had no lobes, and had little pointed tips, a thing that still, in rare instances, survives. Stark-naked vivid little gipsies, as active as monkeys and as full of chatter, though a little wanting in words.

Their elders were hidden from the wallowing hippopotami by the crest of the knoll. The human squatting-place was a trampled area among the dead brown fronds of royal fern, through which the crosiers of this year's growth were unrolling to the light and warmth. The fire was a smouldering heap of char, light grey and black, replenished by the old women from time to time with brown leaves. Most of the men were asleep—they slept sitting with their foreheads on their knees. They had killed that morning a good quarry, enough for all, a deer that had been wounded by hunting dogs; so that there had been no quarrelling among them, and some of the women were still gnawing the bones that lay scattered about. Others were making a heap of leaves and sticks to feed Brother Fire when the darkness came again, that he might grow strong and tall therewith, and guard them against the beasts. And two were piling flints that they brought, an armful at a time, from the bend of the river where the children were at play.

None of these buff-skinned savages were clothed, but some wore about their hips rude girdles of adder-skin or crackling undressed hide, from which depended little bags, not made, but torn from the paws of beasts, and carrying the rudely-dressed flints that were men's chief weapons and tools. And one woman, the mate of Uya the Cunning Man, wore a wonderful necklace of perforated fossils—that others had worn before her. Beside some of the sleeping men lay the big antlers of the elk, with the tines chipped to sharp edges, and long sticks, hacked at the ends with flints into sharp joints. There was little else save these things and the smouldering fire to mark these human beings off from the wild animals that ranged the country. But Uya the Cunning did not sleep, but sat with a bone in his hand and scraped busily thereon with a flint, a thing no animal would do. He was the oldest man in the tribe, beetle-browed, prognathous, lank-armed; he had a beard and his cheeks were hairy, and his chest and arms were black with thick hair. And by virtue both of his strength and cunning he was master of the tribe and his share was always the most and the best.

EVIDENTLY the versatility of H. G. Wells knows no bounds. There is hardly a subject which he has not investigated and on which he cannot write masterfully.

What do you think conditions on this earth were thousands upon thousands of years ago in the stone age, for example? There were no electric lights, no radio, and, for that matter, no stiff collars, no shoes, and no forks, Not even the wheel had been invented.

The first effective weapon of man, namely the stone ax—a tremendous invention by the way—was yet to be evolved.

What did the stone age men think about, how did they live, what were their aspirations, what were their inspirations? Did they love and hate, as do we moderns? H. G. Wells has woven, not a fantastic story by any means, but a really credible work, which, in the light of present-day knowledge, in the light of recent excavations showing the implements of the stone age man and other historical evidence, we may well believe true. We know you will be thrilled with this unusual story.

EUDENA had hidden herself among the alders, because she was afraid of Uya. She was still a girl, and her eyes were bright and her smile pleasant to see. He had given her a piece of the liver, a man's piece, and a wonderful treat for a girl to get; but as she took it the other woman with the necklace had looked at her, an evil glance, and Ugh-lomi had made a noise in his throat. At that, Uya had looked at him long and steadfastly and Ugh-lomi's

face had fallen. And then Uya had looked at her. She was frightened and she had stolen away, while the feeding was still going on, and Uya was busy with the marrow of a bone. Afterwards he had wandered about as if looking for her. And now she crouched among the alders, wondering mightily what Uya might be doing with the flint and the bone. And Ugh-lomi was not to be seen.

Presently a squirrel came leaping through the alders, and she lay so quiet the little man was within six feet of her before he saw her. Whereupon he dashed up a stem in a hurry and began to chatter and scold her. "What are you doing here," he asked, "away from the other men beasts?" "Peace," said Eudena, but he only chattered more, and then she began to break off the little black cones to throw at him. He dodged and defied her, and she grew excited and rose up to throw better, and then she saw Uya coming down the knoll. He had seen the movement of her pale arm amidst the thicket—he was very keen-eyed.

At that she forgot the squirrel and set off through the alders and reeds as fast as she could go. She did not care where she went so long as she escaped Uya. She splashed nearly knee-deep through a swampy place, and saw in front of her a slope of ferns—growing more slender and green as they passed up out of the light into the shade of the young chestnuts. She was soon amidst the trees—she was very fleet of foot, and she ran on and on until the forest was old and the vales great, and the vines about their stems where the light came were thick as young trees, and the ropes of ivy stout and tight. On she went and she doubled and doubled again, and then at last lay down amidst some ferns in a hollow place near a thicket, and listened with her heart beating in her ears.

She heard footsteps presently rustling among the dead leaves, far off, and they died away and everything was still again, except the scandalising of the midges—for the evening was drawing on—and the incessant whisper of the leaves. She laughed silently to think the cunning Uya should go by her. She was not frightened. Sometimes, playing with the other girls and lads, she had fled into the wood, though never so far as this. It was pleasant to be hidden and alone.

She lay a long time there, glad of her escape, and then she sat up listening.

It was a rapid pattering growing louder and coming towards her, and in a little while she could hear grunting noises and the snapping of twigs. It was a drove of lean grisly wild swine. She turned about her, for a boar is an ill fellow to pass too closely, on account of the sideway slash of his tusks, and she made off slantingly through the trees. But the patter came nearer, they were not feeding as they wandered but going fast—or else they would not overtake her—and she caught the limb of a tree, swung on to it, and ran up the stem with something of the agility of a monkey.

Down below the sharp bristling backs of the swine were already passing when she looked. And she knew the short, sharp grunts they made meant fear. What were they afraid of? A man? They were in a great hurry for just a man.

And then, so suddenly it made her grip on the branch tighten involuntarily, a fawn started in the brake and rushed after the swine. Something else went by, low and grey, with a long body; she did not know what it was, indeed she saw it only momentarily through the interstices of the young leaves; and then there came a pause.

She remained stiff and expectant, as rigid almost as though she was a part of the tree she clung to, peering down.

Then, far away among the trees, clear for a moment, then hidden, then visible knee-deep in ferns, then gone again ran a man. She knew it was young Ugh-lomi by the fair colour of his hair, and there was red upon his face. Somehow his frantic flight and that scarlet mark made her feel sick. And then nearer, running heavily and breathing hard, came another man. At first she could not see, and then she saw, foreshortened and clear to her, Uya, running with great strides and his eyes staring. He was not going after Ugh-lomi. His face was white. It was Uya—*afraid!* He passed, and was still within hearing, when something else, something large and with grizzled fur, swinging along with soft swift strides, came rushing in pursuit of him.

EUDENA suddenly became rigid, ceased to breathe, her clutch convulsive, and her eyes starting.

She had never seen the thing before, she did not even see him clearly now, but she knew at once it was the Terror of the Woodshade. His name was a legend, the children would frighten one another, frighten even themselves with his name, and run screaming to the squatting-place. No man had ever killed any of his kind. Even the mighty mammoth feared his anger. It was the grizzly bear, the lord of the world as the world went then.

As he ran he made a continuous growling grumble. "Men in my very lair! Fighting and blood. At the very mouth of my lair. Men, men, men. Fighting and blood." For he was the lord of the wood and of the caves.

Long after he had passed she remained, a girl of stone, staring down through the branches. All her power of action had gone from her. She gripped by instinct with hands and knees and feet. It was some time before she could think, and then only one thing was clear in her mind, that the Terror was between her and the tribe—that it would be impossible to descend.

Presently when her fear was a little abated she clambered into a more comfortable position, where a great branch forked. The trees rose about her, so that she could see nothing of Brother Fire, who is black by day. Birds began to stir, and things that had gone into hiding for fear of her movements crept out. . . .

After a time the taller branches flamed out at the touch of the sunset. High overhead the rooks, who were wiser than men, went cawing home to their squatting-places among the elms. Looking down, things were clearer and darker. Eudena thought of going back to the squatting-place; she let herself down some way, and then the fear of the Terror of the Woodshade came again. While she hesitated, a rabbit squealed dismally, and she dared not descend farther.

The shadows gathered, and the deeps of the forest began stirring. Eudena went up the tree again to be nearer the light. Down below the shadows came out of their hiding-places and walked abroad. Over-

head the blue deepened. A dreadful stillness came, and then the leaves began whispering.

Eudena shivered and thought of Brother Fire.

The shadows now were gathering in the trees, they sat on the branches and watched her. Branches and leaves were turned to ominous, quiet, black shapes that would spring on her if she stirred. Then the white owl, flitting silently, came ghostly through the shades. Darker grew the world and darker, until the leaves and twigs against the sky were black, and the ground was hidden.

She remained there all night, an age-long vigil, straining her ears for the things that went on below in the darkness, and keeping motionless lest some stealthy beast should discover her. Man in those days was never alone in the dark, save for such rare accidents as this. Age after age he had learnt the lesson of its terror—a lesson we poor children of his have nowadays painfully to unlearn. Eudena, though in age a woman, was in heart like a little child. She kept as still, poor little animal, as a hare before it is started.

The stars gathered and watched her—her one grain of comfort. In one bright one she fancied there was something like Ugh-lomi. Then she fancied it *was* Ugh-lomi. And near him, red and duller, was Uya, and as the night passed Ugh-lomi fled before him up the sky.

She tried to see Brother Fire, who guarded the squatting-place from beasts, but he was not in sight. And far away she heard the mammoths trumpeting as they went down to the drinking-place, and once some huge bulk with heavy paces hurried along, making a noise like a calf, but what it was she could not see. But she thought from the voice it was Yaaa the rhinoceros, who stabs with his nose, goes always alone, and rages without cause.

At last the little stars began to hide, and then the larger ones. It was like all the animals vanishing before the Terror. The Sun was coming, lord of the sky, as the grizzly was lord of the forest. Eudena wondered what would happen if one star stayed behind. And then the sky paled to the dawn.

When the daylight came the fear of lurking things passed, and she could descend. She was stiff, but not so stiff as you would have been, dear young lady (by virtue of your upbringing), and as she had not been trained to eat at least once in three hours, but instead had often fasted three days, she did not feel uncomfortably hungry. She crept down the tree very cautiously, and went her way stealthily through the wood, and not a squirrel sprang or deer started but the terror of the grizzly bear froze her marrow.

Her desire was now to find her people again. Her dread of Uya the Cunning was consumed by a greater dread of loneliness. But she had lost her direction. She had run heedlessly overnight, and she could not tell whether the squatting-place was sunward or where it lay. Ever and again she stopped and listened, and at last, very far away, she heard a measured chinking. It was so faint even in the morning stillness that she could tell it must be far away. But she knew the sound was that of a man sharpening a flint.

Presently the trees began to thin out, and then came a regiment of nettles barring the way. She turned aside, and then she came to a fallen tree that she knew, with a noise of bees about it. And so presently she was in sight of the knoll, very far off, and the river under it, and the children and the hippopotami just as they had been yesterday, and the thin spire of smoke swaying in the morning breeze. Far away by the river was the cluster of alders where she had hidden. And at the sight of that the fear of Uya returned, and she crept into a thicket of bracken, out of which a rabbit scuttled, and lay awhile to watch the squatting-place.

THE men were mostly out of sight, saving Wau, the flint-chopper; and at that she felt safer. They were away hunting food, no doubt. Some of the women, too, were down in the stream, stooping intent, seeking mussels, crayfish, and water-snails, and at the sight of their occupation Eudena felt hungry. She rose, and ran through the fern, designing to join them. As she went she heard a voice among the bracken calling softly. She stopped. Then suddenly she heard a rustle behind her, and turning, saw Ugh-lomi rising out of the fern. There were streaks of brown blood and dirt on his face, and his eyes were fierce, and the white stone of Uya, the white Fire Stone, that none but Uya dared to touch, was in his hand. In a stride he was beside her, and gripped her arm. He swung her about, and thrust her before him towards the woods. "Uya," he said, and waved his arms about. She heard a cry, looked back, and saw all the women standing up, and two wading out of the stream. Then came a nearer howling, and the old woman with the beard, who watched the fire on the knoll, was waving her arms, and Wau, the man who had been chipping the flint, was getting to his feet. The little children too were hurrying and shouting.

"Come!" said Ugh-lomi, and dragged her by the arm.

She still did not understand.

"Uya has called the death word," said Ugh-lomi, and she glanced back at the screaming curve of figures, and understood.

Wau and all the women and children were coming towards them, a scattered array of buff shock-headed figures, howling, leaping, and crying. Over the knoll two youths hurried. Down among the ferns to the right came a man, heading them off from the wood. Ugh-lomi dropped her arm, and the two began running side by side, leaping the bracken and stepping clear and wide. Eudena, knowing her fleetness and the fleetness of Ugh-lomi, laughed aloud at the unequal chase. They were an exceptionally straight-limbed couple for those days.

They soon cleared the open, and drew near the wood of chestnut-trees again—neither afraid now because neither was alone. They slackened their pace, already not excessive. And suddenly Eudena cried and swerved aside, pointing, and looking up through the tree-stems. Ugh-lomi saw the feet and legs of men running towards him. Eudena was already running off at a tangent. And as he too turned to follow her they heard the voice of Uya coming through the trees, and roaring out his rage at them.

Then terror came in their hearts, not the terror that numbs, but the terror that makes one silent and swift. They were cut off now on two sides. They were in a sort of corner of pursuit. On the right hand, and near them, came the men swift and heavy, with bearded Uya, antler in hand, leading them; and

on the left, scattered as one scatters corn, yellow dashes among the fern and grass, ran Wau and the women; and even the little children from the shallow had joined the chase. The two parties converged upon them. Off they went, with Eudena ahead.

They knew there was no mercy for them. There was no hunting so sweet to these ancient men as the hunting of men. Once the fierce passion of the chase was lit, the feeble beginnings of humanity in them were thrown to the winds. And Uya in the night had marked Ugh-lomi with the death word. Ugh-lomi was the day's quarry, the appointed feast.

They ran straight—it was their only chance—taking whatever ground came in the way—a spread of stinging nettles, an open glade, a clump of grass out of which a hyæna fled snarling. Then woods again, long stretches of shady leaf-mould and moss under the green trunks. Then a stiff slope, tree-clad, and long vistas of trees, a glade, a succulent green area of black mud, a wide open space again, and then a clump of lacerating brambles, with beast tracks through it. Behind them the chase trailed out and scattered, with Uya ever at their heels. Eudena kept the first place, running light and with her breath easy, for Ugh-lomi carried the Fire Stone in his hand.

It told on his pace—not at first, but after a time. His footsteps behind her suddenly grew remote. Glancing over her shoulder as they crossed another open space, Eudena saw that Ugh-lomi was many yards behind her, and Uya close upon him, with antler already raised in the air to strike him down. Wau and the others were but just emerging from the shadow of the woods.

Seeing Ugh-lomi in peril, Eudena ran sideways, looking back, threw up her arms and cried aloud, just as the antler flew. And young Ugh-lomi, expecting this and understanding her cry, ducked his head, so that the missile merely struck his scalp lightly, making but a trivial wound, and flew over him. He turned forthwith, the quartzite Fire Stone in both hands, and hurled it straight at Uya's body as he ran loose from the throw. Uya shouted, but could not dodge it. It took him under the ribs, heavy and flat, and he reeled and went down without a cry. Ugh-lomi caught up the antler—one tine of it was tipped with his own blood—and came running on again with a red trickle just coming out of his hair.

Uya rolled over twice, and lay a moment before he got up, and then he did not run fast. The colour of his face was changed. Wau overtook him, and then others, and he coughed and laboured in his breath. But he kept on.

AT last the two fugitives gained the bank of the river, where the stream ran deep and narrow, and they still had fifty yards in hand of Wau, the foremost pursuer, the man who made the smiting stones. He carried one, a large flint, the shape of an oyster and double the size, chipped to a chisel edge, in either hand.

They sprang down the steep bank into the stream, rushed through the water, swam the deep current in two or three strokes, and came out wading again, dripping and refreshed, to clamber up the farther bank. It was undermined, and with willows growing thickly therefrom, so that it needed clambering. And while Eudena was still among the silvery branches and Ugh-lomi still in the water—for the antler had encumbered him—Wau came up against the sky on the opposite bank, and the smiting stone, thrown cunningly, took the side of Eudena's knee. She struggled to the top and fell.

They heard the pursuers shout to one another, and Ugh-lomi climbing to her and moving jerkily to mar Wau's aim, felt the second smiting stone graze his ear, and heard the water splash below him.

Then it was Ugh-lomi, the stripling, proved himself to have come to man's estate. For running on, he found Eudena fell behind, limping, and at that he turned, and crying savagely and with a face terrible with sudden wrath and trickling blood, ran swiftly past her back to the bank, whirling the antler round his head. And Eudena kept on, running stoutly still, though she must needs limp at every step, and the pain was already sharp.

So that Wau, rising over the edge and clutching the straight willow branches, saw Ugh-lomi towering over him, gigantic against the blue; saw his whole body swing round, and the grip of his hands upon the antler. The edge of the antler came sweeping through the air, and he saw no more. The water under the osiers whirled and eddied and went crimson six feet down the stream. Uya following stopped knee-high across the stream, and the man who was swimming turned about.

The other men who trailed after—they were none of them very mighty men (for Uya was more cunning than strong, brooking no sturdy rivals)—slackened momentarily at the sight of Ugh-lomi standing there above the willows, bloody and terrible, between them and the halting girl, with the huge antler waving in his hand. It seemed as though he had gone into the water a youth, and come out of it a man full grown.

He knew what there was behind him. A broad stretch of grass, and then a thicket, and in that Eudena could hide. That was clear in his mind, though his thinking powers were too feeble to see what should happen thereafter. Uya stood knee-deep, undecided and unarmed. His heavy mouth hung open, showing his canine teeth, and he panted heavily. His side was flushed and bruised under the hair. The other man beside him carried a sharpened stick. The rest of the hunters came up one by one to the top of the bank, hairy, long-armed men clutching flints and sticks. Two ran off along the bank down stream, and then clambered to the water, where Wau had come to the surface struggling weakly. Before they could reach him he went under again. Two others threatened Ugh-lomi from the bank.

He answered back, shouts, vague insults, gestures. Then Uya, who had been hesitating, roared with rage, and whirling his fists plunged into the water. His followers splashed after him.

Ugh-lomi glanced over his shoulder and found Eudena already vanished into the thicket. He would perhaps have waited for Uya, but Uya preferred to spar in the water below him until the others were beside him. Human tactics in those days, in all serious fighting, were the tactics of the pack. Prey that turned at bay they gathered around and rushed. Ugh-lomi felt the rush coming, and hurling the antler at Uya, turned about and fled.

When he halted to look back from the shadow of the thicket, he found only three of his pursuers had followed him across the river, and they were going

back again. Uya, with a bleeding mouth, was on the farther side of the stream again, but lower down, and holding his hand to his side. The others were in the river dragging something to shore. For a time at least the chase was intermitted.

Ugh-lomi stood watching for a space, and snarled at the sight of Uya. Then he turned and plunged into the thicket.

In a minute, Eudena came hastening to join him, and they went on hand in hand. He dimly perceived the pain she suffered from the cut and bruised knee, and chose the easier ways. But they went on all that day, mile after mile, through wood and thicket, until at last they came to the chalk land, open grass with rare woods of beech, and the birch growing near water, and they saw the Wealden mountains nearer, and groups of horses grazing together. They went circumspectly, keeping always near thicket and cover, for this was a strange region—even its ways were strange. Steadily the ground rose, until the chestnut forests spread wide and blue below them, and the Thames marshes shone silvery, high and far. They saw no men, for in those days men were still only just come into this part of the world, and were moving but slowly along the riverways. Towards evening they came on the river again, but now it ran in a gorge, between high cliffs of white chalk that sometimes overhung it. Down the cliffs was a scrub of birches and there were many birds there. And high up the cliff was a little shelf by a tree, whereon they clambered to pass the night.

THEY had had scarcely any food; it was not the time of year for berries, and they had no time to go aside to snare or waylay. They tramped in a hungry weary silence, gnawing at twigs and leaves. But over the surface of the cliffs were a multitude of snails, and in a bush were the freshly laid eggs of a little bird, and then Ugh-lomi threw at and killed a squirrel in a beech-tree, so that at last they fed well. Ugh-lomi watched during the night, his chin on his knees; and he heard young foxes crying hard by, and the noise of mammoths down the gorge and the hyænas yelling and laughing far away. It was chilly, but they dared not light a fire. Whenever he dozed, his spirit went abroad, and straightway met with the spirit of Uya, and they fought. And always Ugh-lomi was paralysed so that he could not smite nor run, and then he would awake suddenly. Eudena, too, dreamt evil things of Uya, so that they both awoke with the fear of him in their hearts, and by the light of the dawn they saw a woolly rhinoceros go blundering down the valley.

During the day they caressed one another and were glad of the sunshine, and Eudena's leg was so stiff she sat on the ledge all day. Ugh-lomi found great flints sticking out of the cliff face, greater than any he had seen, and he dragged some to the ledge and began chipping, so as to be armed against Uya, when he came again. And at one he laughed heartily, and Eudena laughed, and they threw it about in derision. It had a hole in it. They stuck their fingers through it, it was very funny indeed. Then they peeped at one another through it. Afterwards, Ugh-lomi got himself a stick, and thrusting by chance at this foolish flint, the stick went in and stuck there. He had rammed it in too tightly to withdraw it. That was still stranger—scarcely funny, terrible almost, and for a time Ugh-lomi did not greatly care to touch the thing. It was as if the flint had bit and held with its teeth. But then he got familiar with the odd combination. He swung it about, and perceived that the stick with the heavy stone on the end struck a better blow than anything he knew. He went to and fro swinging it, and striking with it; but later he tired of it and threw it aside. In the afternoon he went up over the brow of the white cliff, and lay watching by a rabbit-warren until the rabbits came out to play. There were no men thereabouts, and the rabbits were heedless. He threw a smiting stone he had made and got a kill.

That night they made a fire from flint sparks and bracken fronds, and talked and caressed by it. And in their sleep Uya's spirit came again, and suddenly, while Ugh-lomi was trying to fight vainly, the foolish flint on the stick came into his hand, and he struck Uya with it, and behold! it killed him. But afterwards came other dreams of Uya—for spirits take a lot of killing, and he had to be killed again. Then after that the stone would not keep on the stick. He awoke tired and rather gloomy, and was sulky all the forenoon, in spite of Eudena's kindliness, and instead of hunting he sat chipping a sharp edge to the singular flint, and looking strangely at her. Then he bound the perforated flint on to the stick with strips of rabbit skin. And afterwards he walked up and down the ledge, striking with it, and muttering to himself, and thinking of Uya. It felt very fine and heavy in the hand.

Several days, more than there was any counting in those days, five days, it may be, or six, did Ugh-lomi and Eudena stay on that shelf in the gorge of the river, and they lost all fear of men, and their fire burnt redly of a night. And they were very merry together; there was food every day, sweet water, and no enemies. Eudena's knee was well in a couple of days, for those ancient savages had quick-healing flesh. Indeed, they were very happy.

On one of those days Ugh-lomi dropped a chunk of flint over the cliff. He saw it fall, and go bounding across the river bank into the river, and after laughing and thinking it over a little he tried another. This smashed a bush of hazel in the most interesting way. They spent all the morning dropping stones from the ledge, and in the afternoon they discovered this new and interesting pastime was also possible from the cliff brow. The next day they had forgotten this delight. Or at least, it seemed they had forgotten.

BUT Uya came in dreams to spoil the paradise. Three nights he came fighting Ugh-lomi. In the morning after these dreams Ugh-lomi would walk up and down, threatening him and swinging the axe, and at last came the night after Ugh-lomi brained the otter, and they had feasted. Uya went too far. Ugh-lomi awoke, scowling under his heavy brows, and he took his axe, and extending his hand towards Eudena he bade her wait for him upon the ledge. Then he clambered down the white declivity, glanced up once from the foot of it and flourished his axe, and without looking back again went striding along the river bank until the overhanging cliff at the bend hid him.

Two days and nights did Eudena sit alone by the fire on the ledge waiting, and in the night the beasts

howled over the cliffs and down the valley, and on the cliff over against her the hunched hyænas prowled black against the sky. But no evil thing came near her save fear. Once, far away, she heard the roaring of a lion, following the horses as they came northward over the grass lands with the spring. All that time she waited—the waiting that is pain.

And the third day Ugh-lomi came back, up the river. The plumes of a raven were in his hair. The first axe was red-stained, and had long dark hairs upon it, and he carried the necklace that had marked the favourite of Uya in his hand. He walked in the soft places, giving no heed to his trail. Save a raw cut below his jaw there was not a wound upon him. "Uya!" cried Ugh-lomi exultant, and Eudena saw it was well. He put the necklace on Eudena, and they ate and drank together. And after eating he began to rehearse the whole story from the beginning, when Uya had cast his eyes on Eudena, and Uya and Ugh-lomi, fighting in the forest, had been chased by the bear, eking out his scanty words with abundant pantomime, springing to his feet and whirling the stone axe round when it came to the fighting. The last fight was a mighty one, stamping and shouting, and once a blow at the fire that sent a torrent of sparks up into the night. And Eudena sat red in the light of the fire, gloating on him, her face flushed and her eyes shining, and the necklace Uya had made about her neck. It was a splendid time, and the stars that looked down on us looked down on her, our ancestor—who has been dead now these fifty thousand years.

CHAPTER II

The Cave Bear

IN the days when Eudena and Ugh-lomi fled from the people of Uya towards the fir-clad mountains of the Weald, across the forests of sweet chestnut and the grass-clad chalk land, and hid themselves at last in the gorge of the river between the chalk cliffs, men were few and their squatting-places far between. The nearest men to them were those of the tribe, a full day's journey down the river, and up the mountains there were none. Man was indeed a newcomer to this part of the world in that ancient time, coming slowly along the rivers, generation after generation, from one squatting-place to another, from the south-westward. And the animals that held the land, the hippopotamus and rhinoceros of the river valleys, the horses of the grass plains, the deer and swine of the woods, the grey apes in the branches, the cattle of the uplands, feared him but little—let alone the mammoths in the mountains and the elephants that came through the land in the summer-time out of the south. For why should they fear him, with but the rough, chipped flints that he had not learnt to haft and which he threw but ill, and the poor spear of sharpened wood, as all the weapons he had against hoof and horn, tooth and claw?

Andoo, the huge cave bear, who lived in the cave up the gorge, had never even seen a man in all his wise and respectable life, until midway through one night, as he was prowling down the gorge along the cliff edge, he saw the glare of Eudena's fire upon the ledge, and Eudena red and shining, and Ugh-lomi, with a gigantic shadow mocking him upon the white cliff, going to and fro, shaking his mane of hair, and waving the axe of stone—the first axe of stone—while he chanted of the killing of Uya. The cave bear was far up the gorge, and he saw the thing slanting-ways and far off. He was so surprised he stood quite still upon the edge, sniffing the novel odour of burning bracken, and wondering whether the dawn was coming up in the wrong place.

He was the lord of the rocks and caves, was the cave bear, as his slighter brother, the grizzly, was lord of the thick woods below, and as the dappled lion—the lion of those days was dappled—was lord of the thorn-thickets, reedbeds, and open plains. He was the greatest of all meat-eaters; he knew no fear, none preyed on him, and none gave him battle; only the rhinoceros was beyond his strength. Even the mammoth shunned his country. This invasion perplexed him. He noticed these new beasts were shaped like monkeys, and sparsely hairy like young pigs. "Monkey and young pig," said the cave bear. "It might not be so bad. But that red thing that jumps, and the black thing jumping with it yonder! Never in my life have I seen such things before!"

He came slowly along the brow of the cliff towards them, stopping thrice to sniff and peer, and the reek of the fire grew stronger. A couple of hyænas also were so intent upon the thing below that Andoo, coming soft and easy, was close upon them before they knew of him or he of them. They started guiltily and went lurching off. Coming round in a wheel, a hundred yards off, they began yelling and calling him names to revenge themselves for the start they had had. "Ya-ha!" they cried. "Who can't grub his own burrows? Who eats roots like a pig? . . . Ya-ha!" for even in those days the hyæna's manners were just as offensive as they are now.

"Who answers the hyæna?" growled Andoo, peering through the midnight dinness at them, and then going to look at the cliff edge.

There was Ugh-lomi still telling his story, and the fire getting low, and the scent of the burning hot and strong.

Andoo stood on the edge of the chalk cliff for some time, shifting his vast weight from foot to foot, and swaying his head to and fro, with his mouth open, his ears erect and twitching, and the nostrils of his big black muzzle sniffing. He was very curious, was the cave bear, more curious than any of the bears that live now, and the flickering fire and the incomprehensible movements of the man, let alone the intrusion into his indisputable province, stirred him with a sense of strange new happenings. He had been after red deer fawn that night, for the cave bear was a miscellaneous hunter, but this quite turned him from that enterprise.

"Ya-ha!" yelled the hyænas behind. "Ya-ha-ha!"

Peering through the starlight, Andoo saw there were now three or four going to and fro against the grey hillside. "They will hang about me now all the night. . . . until I kill," said Andoo. "Filth of the world!" And mainly to annoy them, he resolved to watch the red flicker in the gorge until the dawn came to drive the hyæna scum home. And after a time they vanished, and he heard their voices, like a party of Cockney beanfeasters, away in the beech-woods. Then they came slinking near again. Andoo yawned and went on along the cliff, and they followed. Then he stopped and went back.

It was a splendid night, beset with shining constellations, the same stars, but not the same constellations we know, for since those days all the stars have had time to move into new places. Far away across the open space beyond where the heavy-shouldered, lean-bodied hyænas blundered and howled, was a beech-wood, and the mountain slopes rose beyond, a dim mystery, until their snow-capped summits came out white and cold and clear, touched by the first rays of the yet unseen moon. It was a vast silence, save when the yell of the hyænas flung a vanishing discordance across its peace, or when from down the hills the trumpeting of the new-come elephants came faintly on the faint breeze. And below now, the red flicker had dwindled and was steady, and shone a deeper red, and Ugh-lomi had finished his story and was preparing to sleep, and Eudena sat and listened to the strange voices of unknown beasts, and watched the dark eastern sky growing deeply luminous at the advent of the moon. Down below, the river talked to itself, and things unseen went to and fro.

After a time the bear went away, but in an hour he was back again. Then, as if struck by a thought, he turned, and went up the gorge. . . .

THE night passed, and Ugh-lomi slept on. The waning moon rose and lit the gaunt white cliff overhead with a light that was pale and vague. The gorge remained in a deeper shadow and seemed all the darker. Then by imperceptible degrees, the day came stealing in the wake of the moonlight. Eudena's eyes wandered to the cliff brow overhead once, and then again. Each time the line was sharp and clear against the sky, and yet she had a dim perception of something lurking there. The red of the fire grew deeper and deeper, grey scales spread upon it, its vertical column of smoke became more and more visible, and up and down the gorge things that had been unseen grew clear in a colourless illumination. She may have dozed.

Suddenly she started up from her squatting position, erect and alert, scrutinising the cliff up and down.

She made the faintest sound, and Ugh-lomi too, light-sleeping like an animal, was instantly awake. He caught up his axe and came noiselessly to her side.

The light was still dim, the world now all in black and dark grey, and one sickly star still lingered overhead. The ledge they were on was a little grassy space, six feet wide, perhaps, and twenty feet long, sloping outwardly, and with a handful of St. John's wort growing near the edge. Below it the soft, white rock fell away in a steep slope of nearly fifty feet to the thick bush of hazel that fringed the river. Down the river this slope increased, until some way off a thin grass held its own right up to the crest of the cliff. Overhead, forty or fifty feet of rock bulged into the great masses characteristic of chalk, but at the end of the ledge a gully, a precipitous groove of discoloured rock, slashed the face of the cliff, and gave a footing to a scrubby growth, by which Eudena and Ugh-lomi went up and down.

They stood as noiseless as startled deer, with every sense expectant. For a minute they heard nothing, and then came a faint rattling of dust down the gully, and the creaking of twigs.

Ugh-lomi gripped his axe, and went to the brow of the ledge, for the bulge of the chalk overhead had hidden the upper part of the gully. And forthwith, with a sudden contraction of the heart, he saw the cave bear half-way down from the brow, and making a gingerly backward step with his flat hind-foot. His hind-quarters were towards Ugh-lomi, and he clawed at the rocks and bushes so that he seemed flattened against the cliff. He looked none the less for that. From his shining snout to his stumpy tail he was a lion and a half, the length of two tall men. He looked over his shoulder, and his huge mouth was open with the exertion of holding up his great carcass, and his tongue lay out. . . .

He got his footing, and came down slowly, a yard nearer.

"Bear," said Ugh-lomi, looking round with his face white.

But Eudena, with terror in her eyes, was pointing down the cliff.

Ugh-lomi's mouth fell open. For down below, with her big fore-feet against the rock, stood another big brown-grey bulk—the she-bear. She was not so big as Andoo, but she was big enough for all that.

Then suddenly Ugh-lomi gave a cry, and catching up a handful of the litter of ferns that lay scattered on the ledge, he thrust it into the pallid ash of the fire. "Brother Fire!" he cried, "Brother Fire!" And Eudena, starting into activity, did likewise. "Brother Fire! Help, help! Brother Fire!"

Brother Fire was still red in his heart, but he turned to grey as they scattered him. "Brother Fire!" they screamed. But he whispered and passed, and there was nothing but ashes. Then Ugh-lomi danced with anger and struck the ashes with his fist. But Eudena began to hammer the firestone against a flint. And the eyes of each were turning ever and again towards the gully by which Andoo was climbing down. Brother Fire!

SUDDENLY the huge furry hind-quarters of the bear came into view, beneath the bulge of the chalk that had hidden him. He was still clambering gingerly down the nearly vertical surface. His head was yet out of sight, but they could hear him talking to himself. "Pig and monkey," said the cave bear. "It ought to be good."

Eudena struck a spark and blew at it; it twinkled brighter and then—went out. At that she cast down flint and firestone and stared blankly. Then she sprang to her feet and scrambled a yard or so up the cliff above the ledge. How she hung on even for a moment I do not know, for the chalk was vertical and without grip for a monkey. In a couple of seconds she had slid back to the ledge again with bleeding hands.

Ugh-lomi was making frantic rushes about the ledge—now he would go to the edge, now to the gully. He did not know what to do, he could not think. The she-bear looked smaller than her mate—much. If they rushed down on her together, *one* might live. "Ugh?" said the cave bear, and Ugh-lomi turned again and saw his little eyes peering under the bulge of the chalk.

Eudena, cowering at the end of the ledge, began to scream like a gripped rabbit.

At that a sort of madness came upon Ugh-lomi. With a mighty cry, he caught up his axe and ran towards Andoo. The monster gave a grunt of surprise. In a moment Ugh-lomi was clinging to a

bush right underneath the bear, and in another he was hanging to its back half buried in fur, with one fist clutched in the hair under its jaw. The bear was too astonished at this fantastic attack to do more than cling passive. And then the axe, the first of all axes, rang on its skull.

The bear's head twisted from side to side, and he began a petulant scolding growl. The axe bit within an inch of the left eye, and the hot blood blinded that side. At that the brute roared with surprise and anger, and his teeth gnashed six inches from Ugh-lomi's face. Then the axe, clubbed close, came down heavily on the corner of the jaw.

The next blow blinded the right side and called forth a roar, this time of pain. Eudena saw the huge, flat feet slipping and sliding, and suddenly the bear gave a clumsy leap sideways, as if for the ledge. Then everything vanished, and the hazels smashed, and a roar of pain and a tumult of shouts and growls came up from far below.

Eudena screamed and ran to the edge and peered over. For a moment, man and bears were a heap together, Ugh-lomi uppermost; and then he had sprung clear and was scaling the gully again, with the bears rolling and striking at one another among the hazels. But he had left his axe below, and three knob-ended streaks of carmine were shooting down his thigh. "Up!" he cried, and in a moment Eudena was leading the way to the top of the cliff.

In half a minute they were at the crest, their hearts pumping noisily, with Andoo and his wife far and safe below them. Andoo was sitting on his haunches, both paws at work, trying with quick exasperated movements to wipe the blindness out of his eyes, and the she-bear stood on all-fours a little way off, ruffled in appearance and growling angrily. Ugh-lomi flung himself flat on the grass, and lay panting and bleeding with his face on his arms.

For a second Eudena regarded the bears, then she came and sat beside him, looking at him. . . .

Presently she put forth her hand timidly and touched him, and made the guttural sound that was his name. He turned over and raised himself on his arm. His face was pale, like the face of one who is afraid. He looked at her steadfastly for a moment, and then suddenly he laughed. "Waugh!" he said exultantly.

"Waugh!" said she—a simple but expressive conversation.

Then Ugh-lomi came and knelt beside her, and on hands and knees peered over the brow and examined the gorge. His breath was steady now, and the blood on his leg had ceased to flow, though the scratches the she-bear had made were open and wide. He squatted up and sat staring at the footmarks of the great bear as they came to the gully—they were as wide as his head and twice as long. Then he jumped up and went along the cliff face until the ledge was visible. Here he sat down for some time thinking, while Eudena watched him. Presently she saw the bears had gone.

At last Ugh-lomi rose, as one whose mind is made up. He returned towards the gully, Eudena keeping close by him, and together they clambered to the ledge. They took the firestone and a flint, and then Ugh-lomi went down to the foot of the cliff very cautiously, and found his axe. They returned to the cliff as quietly as they could, and set off at a brisk walk. The ledge was a home no longer, with such callers in the neighbourhood. Ugh-lomi carried the axe and Eudena the firestone. So simple was a Palæolithic removal.

THEY went up-stream, although it might lead to the very lair of the cave bear, because there was no other way to go. Down the stream was the tribe, and had not Ugh-lomi killed Uya and Wau? By the stream they had to keep—because of drinking.

So they marched through beech trees, with the gorge deepening until the river flowed, a frothing rapid, five hundred feet below them. Of all the changeful things in this world of change, the courses of rivers in deep valleys change least. It was the river Wey, the river we know to-day, and they marched over the very spots where nowadays stand little Guildford and Godalming — the first human beings to come into the land. Once a grey ape chattered and vanished, and all along the cliff edge, vast and even, ran the spoor of the great cave bear.

And then the spoor of the bear fell away from the cliff, showing, Ugh-lomi thought, that he came from some place to the left, and keeping to the cliff's edge, they presently came to an end. They found themselves looking down on a great semi-circular space caused by the collapse of the cliff. It had smashed right across the gorge, banking the up-stream water back in a pool which overflowed in a rapid. The slip had happened long ago. It was grassed over, but the face of the cliffs that stood about the semi-circle was still almost fresh-looking and white as on the day when the rock must have broken and slid down. Starkly exposed and black under the foot of these cliffs were the mouths of several caves. And as they stood there, looking at the space, and disinclined to skirt it, because they thought the bears' lair lay somewhere on the left in the direction they must needs take, they saw suddenly first one bear and then two coming up the grass slope to the right and going across the amphitheatre towards the caves. Andoo was first; he dropped a little on his fore-foot and his mien was despondent, and the she-bear came shuffling behind.

Eudena and Ugh-lomi stepped back from the cliff until they could just see the bears over the verge. Then Ugh-lomi stopped. Eudena pulled his arm, but he turned with a forbidding gesture, and her hand dropped. Ugh-lomi stood watching the bears, with his axe in his hand, until they had vanished into the cave. He growled softly, and shook the axe at the she-bear's receding quarters. Then to Eudena's terror, instead of creeping off with her, he lay flat down and crawled forward into such a position that he could just see the cave. It was bears—and he did it as calmly as if it had been rabbits he was watching!

He lay still, like a barked log, sun-dappled, in the shadow of the trees. He was thinking. And Eudena had learnt, even when a little girl, that when Ugh-lomi became still like that, jawbone on fist, novel things presently began to happen.

It was an hour before the thinking was over; it was noon when the two little savages had found their way to the cliff brow that overhung the bears' cave. And all the long afternoon they fought desperately with a great boulder of chalk; trundling it, with nothing but their unaided sturdy muscles, from the gully where it had hung like a loose tooth, towards the cliff top. It was full two yards about

it stood as high as Eudena's waist, it was obtuse-angled and toothed with flints. And when the sun set it was poised, three inches from the edge, above the cave of the great cave bear.

In the cave conversation languished during that afternoon. The she-bear snoozed sulkily in her corner—for she was fond of pig and monkey—and Andoo was busy licking the side of his paw and smearing his face to cool the smart and inflammation of his wounds. Afterwards he went and sat just within the mouth of the cave, blinking out at the afternoon sun with his uninjured eye, and thinking.

"I never was so startled in my life," he said at last. "They are the most extraordinary beasts. Attacking *me!*"

"I don't like them," said the she-bear, out of the darkness behind.

"A feebler sort of beast I *never* saw. I can't think what the world is coming to. Scraggy, weedy legs. . . . Wonder how they keep warm in winter?"

"Very likely they don't," said the she-bear.

"I suppose it's a sort of monkey gone wrong."

"It's a change," said the she-bear.

A pause.

"The advantage he had was merely accidental," said Andoo. "These things *will* happen at times."

"*I* can't understand why you let go," said the she-bear.

THAT matter had been discussed before, and settled. So Andoo, being a bear of experience, remained silent for a space. Then he resumed upon a different aspect of the matter. "He has a sort of claw—a long claw that he seemed to have first on one paw and then on the other. Just one claw. They're very odd things. The bright thing, too, they seemed to have—like that glare that comes in the sky in daytime—only it jumps about—it's really worth seeing. It's a thing with a root, too—like grass when it is windy."

"Does it bite?" asked the she-bear. "If it bites it can't be a plant."

"No—I don't know," said Andoo. "But it's curious, anyhow."

"I wonder if they *are* good eating?" said the she-bear.

"They look it," said Andoo, with appetite—for the cave bear, like the polar bear, was an incurable carnivore—no roots or honey for *him*.

The two bears fell into a meditation for a space. Then Andoo resumed his simple attentions to his eye. The sunlight up the green slope before the cave mouth grew warmer in tone and warmer, until it was a ruddy amber.

"Curious sort of thing—day," said the cave bear. "Lot too much of it, I think. Quite unsuitable for hunting. Dazzles me always. I can't smell nearly so well by day."

The she-bear did not answer, but there came a measured crunching sound out of the darkness. She had turned up a bone. Andoo yawned. "Well," he said. He strolled to the cave mouth and stood with his head projecting, surveying the amphitheatre. He found he had to turn his head completely round to see objects on his right-hand side. No doubt that eye would be all right to-morrow.

He yawned again. There was a tap overhead, and a big mass of chalk flew out from the cliff face, dropped a yard in front of his nose, and starred into a dozen unequal fragments. It startled him extremely.

When he had recovered a little from his shock, he went and sniffed curiously at the representative pieces of the fallen projectile. They had a distinctive flavour, oddly reminiscent of the two drab animals of the ledge. He sat up and pawed the larger lump, and walked round it several times, trying to find a man about it somewhere. . . .

When night had come he went off down the river gorge to see if he could cut off either of the ledge's occupants. The ledge was empty, there were no signs of the red thing, but as he was rather hungry he did not loiter long that night, but pushed on to pick up a red deer fawn. He forgot about the drab animals. He found a fawn, but the doe was close by and made an ugly fight for her young. Andoo had to leave the fawn, but as her blood was up she stuck to the attack, and at last he got in a blow of his paw on her nose, and so got hold of her. More meat but less delicacy, and the she-bear, following, had her share. The next afternoon, curiously enough, the very fellow of the first white rock fell, and smashed precisely according to precedent.

The aim of the third, that fell the night after, however, was better. It hit Andoo's unspeculative skull with a crack that echoed up the cliff, and the white fragments went dancing to all the points of the compass. The she-bear coming after him and sniffing curiously at him, found him lying in an odd sort of attitude, with his head wet and all out of shape. She was a young she-bear, and inexperienced, and having sniffed about him for some time and licked him a little, and so forth, she decided to leave him until the odd mood had passed, and went on her hunting alone.

She looked up the fawn of the red doe they had killed two nights ago, and found it. But it was lonely hunting without Andoo, and she returned caveward before dawn. The sky was grey and overcast, the trees up the gorge were black and unfamiliar, and into her ursine mind came a dim sense of strange and dreary happenings. She lifted up her voice and called Andoo by name. The sides of the gorge reechoed her.

As she approached the caves she saw in the half light, and heard a couple of jackals scuttle off, and immediately after a hyæna howled and a dozen clumsy bulks went lumbering up the slope, and stopped and yelled derision. "Lord of the rocks and caves—ya-ha!" came down the wind. The dismal feeling in the she-bear's mind became suddenly acute. She shuffled across the amphitheatre.

"Ya-ha!" said the hyænas, retreating. "Ya-ha!"

The cave bear was not lying quite in the same attitude, because the hyænas had been busy, and in one place his ribs showed white. Dotted over the turf about him lay the smashed fragments of the three great lumps of chalk. And the air was full of the scent of death.

The she-bear stopped dead. Even now, that the great and wonderful Andoo was killed was beyond her believing. Then she heard far overhead a sound, a queer sound, a little like the shout of a hyæna but fuller and lower in pitch. She looked up, her little dawn-blinded eyes seeing little, her nostrils quivering. And there, on the cliff edge, far above her against the bright pink of dawn, were two little

shaggy round dark things, the heads of Eudena and Ugh-lomi, as they shouted derision at her. But though she could not see them very distinctly she could hear, and dimly she began to apprehend. A novel feeling as of imminent strange evils came into her heart.

She began to examine the smashed fragments of chalk that lay about Andoo For a space she stood still, looking about her and making a low continuous sound that was almost a moan. Then she went back incredulously to Andoo to make one last effort to rouse him.

CHAPTER III

The First Horseman

IN the days before Ugh-lomi there was little trouble between the horses and men. They lived apart—the men in the river swamps and thickets, the horses on the wide grassy uplands between the chestnuts and the pines. Sometimes a pony would come straying into the clogging marshes to make a flint-hacked meal, and sometimes the tribe would find one, the kill of a lion, and drive off the jackals, and feast heartily while the sun was high. These horses of the old time were clumsy at the fetlock and dun-coloured, with a rough tail and big head. They came every spring-time north-westward into the country, after the swallows and before the hippopotami, as the grass on the wide downland stretches grew long. They came only in small bodies thus far, each herd, a stallion and two or three mares and a foal or so, having its own stretch of country, and they went again when the chestnut-trees were yellow and the wolves came down the Wealden mountains.

It was their custom to graze right out in the open, going into cover only in the heat of the day. They avoided the long stretches of thorn and beechwood, preferring an isolated group of trees void of ambuscade, so that it was hard to come upon them. They were never fighters; their heels and teeth were for one another, but in the clear country, once they were started, no living thing came near them, though perhaps the elephant might have done so had he felt the need. And in those days man seemed a harmless thing enough. No whisper of prophetic intelligence told the species of the terrible slavery that was to come, of the whip and spur and bearing-rein, the clumsy load and the slippery street, the insufficient food, and the knacker's yard, that was to replace the wide grass-land and the freedom of the earth.

Down in the Wey marshes Ugh-lomi and Eudena had never seen the horses closely, but now they saw them every day as the two of them raided out from their lair on the ledge in the gorge, raiding together in search of food. They had returned to the ledge after the killing of Andoo; for of the she-bear they were not afraid. The she-bear had become afraid of them, and when she winded them she went aside. The two went together everywhere; for since they left the tribe Eudena was not so much Ugh-lomi's woman as his mate; she learnt to hunt even—as much, that is, as any woman could. She was indeed a marvellous woman. He would lie for hours watching a beast, or planning catches in that shock head of his, and she would stay beside him, with her bright eyes upon him, offering no irritating suggestions—as still as any man. A wonderful woman!

At the top of the cliff was an open grassy lawn and then beechwoods, and going through the beechwoods one came to the edge of the rolling grassy expanse, and in sight of the horses. Here, on the edge of the wood and bracken, were the rabbit-burrows, and here among the fronds Eudena and Ugh-lomi would lie with their throwing-stones ready, until the little people came out to nibble and play in the sunset. And while Eudena would sit, a silent figure of watchfulness, regarding the burrows, Ugh-lomi's eyes were ever away across the greensward at those wonderful grazing strangers.

In a dim way he appreciated their grace and their supple nimbleness. As the sun declined in the evening-time, and the heat of the day passed, they would become active, would start chasing one another, neighing, dodging, shaking their manes, coming round in great curves, sometimes so close that the pounding of the turf sounded like hurried thunder. It looked so fine that Ugh-lomi wanted to join in badly. And sometimes one would roll over on the turf, kicking four hoofs heavenward, which seemed formidable and was certainly much less alluring.

Dim imaginings ran through Ugh-lomi's mind as he watched—by virtue of which two rabbits lived the longer. And sleeping, his brains were clearer and bolder—for that was the way in those days. He came near the horses, he dreamt, and fought, smiting-stone against hoof, but then the horses changed to men, or, at least, to men with horses' heads, and he awoke in a cold sweat of terror.

Yet the next day in the morning, as the horses were grazing, one of the mares whinnied, and they saw Ugh-lomi coming up the wind. They all stopped their eating and watched him. Ugh-lomi was not coming towards them, but strolling obliquely across the open, looking at anything in the world but horses. He had stuck three fern-fronds into the mat of his hair, giving him a remarkable appearance, and he walked very slowly. "What's up now?" said the Master Horse, who was capable, but inexperienced.

"It looks more like the first half of an animal than anything else in the world," he said, "Forelegs and no hind."

"It's only one of those pink monkey things," said the Eldest Mare. "They're a sort of river monkey. They're quite common on the plains."

Ugh-lomi continued his oblique advance. The Eldest Mare was struck with the want of motive in his proceedings.

"Fool!" said the Eldest Mare, in a quick conclusive way she had. She resumed her grazing. The Master Horse and the Second Mare followed suit.

"Look! he's nearer," said the Foal with a stripe.

One of the younger foals made uneasy movements. Ugh-lomi squatted down, and sat regarding the horses fixedly. In a little while he was satisfied that they meant neither flight nor hostilities. He began to consider his next procedure. He did not feel anxious to kill, but he had his axe with him, and the spirit of sport was upon him. How would one kill one of these creatures?—these great beautiful creatures!

EUDENA, watching him with a fearful admiration from the cover of the bracken, saw him presently go on all fours, and so proceed again. But the horses preferred him a biped to a quadruped, and the Master Horse threw up his head and gave the word to move. Ugh-lomi thought they were off for good, but after a minute's gallop they came round in a wide curve, and stood winding him. Then, as a rise in the ground hid him, they tailed out, the Master Horse leading, and approached him spirally.

He was as ignorant of the possibilities of a horse as they were of his. And at this stage it would seem he funked. He knew this kind of stalking would make red deer or buffalo charge, if it were persisted in. At any rate Eudena saw him jump up and come walking towards her with the fern plumes held in his hand.

She stood up, and he grinned to show that the whole thing was an immense lark, and that what he had done was just what he had planned to do from the very beginning. So that incident ended. But he was very thoughtful all that day.

The next day this foolish drab creature with the leonine mane, instead of going about the grazing or hunting he was made for, was prowling round the horses again. The Eldest Mare was all for silent contempt. "I suppose he wants to learn something from us," she said, and "*Let* him." The next day he was at it again. The Master Horse decided he meant absolutely nothing. But as a matter of fact, Ugh-lomi, the first of men to feel that curious spell of the horse that binds us even to this day, meant a great deal. He admired them unreservedly. There was a rudiment of the snob in him, I am afraid, and he wanted to be near those beautifully-curved animals. Then there were vague conceptions of a kill. If only they would let him come near them! But they drew the line, he found, at fifty yards. If he came nearer than that they moved off—with dignity. I suppose it was the way he had blinded Andoo that made him think of leaping on the back of one of them. But though Eudena after a time came out in the open too, and they did some unobtrusive stalking, things stopped there.

Then one memorable day a new idea came to Ugh-lomi. The horse looks down and level, but he does not look up. No animals look up—they have too much common-sense. It was only that fantastic creature, man, could waste his wits skyward. Ugh-lomi made no philosophical deductions, but he perceived the thing was so. So he spent a weary day in a beech that stood in the open, while Eudena stalked. Usually the horses went into the shade in the heat of the afternoon, but that day the sky was overcast, and they would not, in spite of Eudena's solicitude.

It was two days later that Ugh-lomi had his desire. The day was blazing hot, and the multiplying flies asserted themselves. The horses stopped grazing before mid-day, and came into the shadow below him, and stood in couples nose to tail, flapping.

The Master Horse, by virtue of his heels, came closest to the tree. And suddenly there was a rustle and a creak, a *thud*. . . . Then a sharp chipped flint bit him on the cheek. The Master Horse stumbled, came on one knee, rose to his feet, and was off like the wind. The air was full of the whirl of limbs, the prance of hoofs, and snorts of alarm. Ugh-lomi was pitched a foot in the air, came down again, up again, his stomach was hit violently, and then his knees got a grip of something between them. He found himself clutching with knees, feet, and hands, careering violently with extraordinary oscillation through the air—his axe gone heaven knows whither. "Hold tight," said Mother Instinct, and he did.

He was aware of a lot of coarse hair in his face, some of it between his teeth, and of green turf streaming past in front of his eyes. He saw the shoulder of the Master Horse, vast and sleek, with the muscles flowing swiftly under the skin. He perceived that his arms were round the neck, and that the violent jerkings he experienced had a sort of rhythm.

Then he was in the midst of a wild rush of tree-stems, and then there were fronds of bracken about, and then more open turf. Then a stream of pebbles rushing past, little pebbles flying sideways athwart the stream from the blow of the swift hoofs. Ugh-lomi began to feel frightfully sick and giddy, but he was not the stuff to leave go simply because he was uncomfortable.

He dared not leave his grip, but he tried to make himself more comfortable. He released his hug on the neck, gripping the mane instead. He slipped his knees forward, and pushing back, came into a sitting position where the quarters broaden. It was nervous work, but he managed it, and at last he was fairly seated astride, breathless indeed, and uncertain, but with that frightful pounding of his body at any rate relieved.

SLOWLY the fragments of Ugh-lomi's mind got into order again. The pace seemed to him terrific, but a kind of exultation was beginning to oust his first frantic terror. The air rushed by, sweet and wonderful, the rhythm of the hoofs changed and broke up and returned into itself again. They were on turf now, a wide glade—the beech-trees a hundred yards away on either side, and a succulent band of green starred with pink blossom and shot with silver water here and there, meandered down the middle. Far off was a glimpse of blue valley—far away. The exultation grew. It was man's first taste of pace.

Then came a wide space dappled with flying fallow deer scattering this way and that, and then a couple of jackals, mistaking Ugh-lomi for a lion, came hurrying after him. And when they saw it was not a lion they still came on out of curiosity. On galloped the horse, with his one idea of escape, and after him the jackals, with pricked ears and quickly-barked remarks. "Which kills which?" said the first jackal. "It's the horse being killed," said the second. They gave the howl of following, and the horse answered to it as a horse answers nowadays to the spur.

On they rushed, a little tornado through the quiet day, putting up startled birds, sending a dozen unexpected things darting to cover, raising a myriad of indignant dung-flies, smashing little blossoms flowering complacently, back into their parental turf. Trees again, and then splash, splash across a torrent; then a hare shot out of a tuft of grass under the very hoofs of the Master Horse, and the jackals left them incontinently. So presently they broke into the open again, a wide expanse of turfy hillside—the very grassy downs that fall northward nowadays from the Epsom Stand.

The first hot bolt of the Master Horse was long since over. He was falling into a measured trot, and Ugh-lomi, albeit bruised exceedingly and quite uncertain of the future, was in a state of glorious enjoyment. And now came a new development. The pace broke again, the Master Horse came round on a short curve, and stopped dead. . . .

Ugh-lomi became alert. He wished he had a flint, but the throwing flint he had carried in a thong about his waist was—like the axe—heaven knows where. The Master Horse turned his head, and Ugh-lomi became aware of an eye and teeth. He whipped his leg into a position of security, and hit at the cheek with his fist. Then the head went down somewhere out of existence apparently, and the back he was sitting on flew up into a dome. Ugh-lomi became a thing of instinct again—strictly prehensible; he held by knees and feet, and his head seemed sliding towards the turf. His fingers were twisted into the shock of mane, and the rough hair of the horse saved him. The gradient he was on lowered again, and then—"Whup!" said Ugh-lomi astonished, and the slant was the other way up. But Ugh-lomi was a thousand generations nearer the primordial than man: no monkey could have held on better. And the lion had been training the horse for countless generations against the tactics of rolling and rearing back. But he kicked like a master, and buck-jumped rather neatly. In five minutes Ugh-lomi lived a lifetime. If he came off, the horse would kill him, he felt assured.

Then the Master Horse decided to stick to his old tactics again, and suddenly went off at a gallop. He headed down the slope, taking the steep places at a rush, swerving neither to the right nor to the left, and, as they rode down, the wide expanse of valley sank out of sight behind the approaching skirmishers of oak and hawthorn. They skirted a sudden hollow with the pool of a spring, rank weeds and silver bushes. The ground grew softer and the grass taller, and on the right-hand side and the left came scattered bushes of May—still splashed with belated blossom. Presently the bushes thickened until they lashed the passing rider, and little flashes and gouts of blood came out on horse and man. Then the way opened again.

AND then came a wonderful adventure. A sudden squeal of unreasonable anger rose amidst the bushes, the squeal of some creature bitterly wronged. And crashing after them appeared a big, grey-blue shape. It was Yaaa the big-horned rhinoceros, in one of those fits of fury of his, charging full tilt, after the manner of his kind. He had been startled at his feeding, and someone, it did not matter who, was to be ripped and trampled therefore. He was bearing down on them from the left, with his wicked little eye red, his great horn down and his tail like a jury-mast behind him. For a minute Ugh-lomi was minded to slip off and dodge, and then behold! the staccato of the hoofs grew swifter, and the rhinoceros and his stumpy hurrying little legs seemed to slide out at the back corner of Ugh-lomi's eye. In two minutes they were through the bushes of May, and out in the open, going fast. For a space he could hear the ponderous paces in pursuit receding behind him, and then it was just as if Yaaa had not lost his temper, as if Yaaa had never existed.

The pace never faltered, on they rode and on.

Ugh-lomi was now all exultation. To exult in those days was to insult. "Ya-ha! big nose!" he said, trying to crane back and see some remote speck of a pursuer. "Why don't you carry your smiting-stone in your fist?" he ended with a frantic whoop.

But that whoop was unfortunate, for coming close to the ear of the horse, and being quite unexpected, it startled the stallion extremely. He shied violently. Ugh-lomi suddenly found himself uncomfortable again. He was hanging on to the horse, he found, by one arm and one knee.

The rest of the ride was honourable but unpleasant. The view was chiefly of blue sky, and that was combined with the most unpleasant physical sensations. Finally, a bush of thorn lashed him and he let go.

He hit the ground with his cheek and shoulder, and then, after a complicated and extraordinarily rapid movement, hit it again with the end of his backbone. He saw splashes and sparks of light and colour. The ground seemed bouncing about just like the horse had done. Then he found he was sitting on turf, six yards beyond the bush. In front of him was a space of grass, growing greener and greener, and a number of human beings in the distance, and the horse was going round at a smart gallop quite a long way off to the right.

The human beings were on the opposite side of the river, some still in the water, but they were all running away as hard as they could go. The advent of a monster that took to pieces was not the sort of novelty they cared for. For quite a minute Ugh-lomi sat regarding them in a purely spectacular spirit. The bend of the river, the knoll among the reeds and royal ferns, the thin streams of smoke going up to Heaven, were all perfectly familiar to him. It was the squatting-place of the Sons of Uya, of Uya from whom he had fled with Eudena, and whom he had waylaid in the chestnut woods and killed with the First Axe.

He rose to his feet, still dazed from his fall, and as he did so the scattering fugitives turned and regarded him. Some pointed to the receding horse and chattered. He walked slowly towards them, staring. He forgot the horse, he forgot his own bruises, in the growing interest of this encounter. There were fewer of them than there had been—he supposed the others must have hid—the heap of fern for the night fire was not so high. By the flint heaps should have sat Wau—but then he remembered he had killed Wau. Suddenly brought back to this familiar scene, the gorge and the bears and Eudena seemed things remote, things dreamt of.

He stopped at the bank and stood regarding the tribe. His mathematical abilities were of the slightest, but it was certain there were fewer. The men might be away, but there were fewer women and children. He gave the shout of home-coming. His quarrel had been with Uya and Wau—not with the others. "Children of Uya!" he cried. They answered with his name, a little fearfully because of the strange way he had come.

For a space they spoke together. Then an old woman lifted a shrill voice and answered him. "Our Lord is a Lion."

Ugh-lomi did not understand that saying. They answered him again several together, "Uya comes again. He comes as a Lion. Our Lord is a Lion. He comes at night. He slays whom he will. But

none other may slay us, Ugh-lomi, none other may slay us."

Still Ugh-lomi did not understand.

"Our Lord is a Lion. He speaks no more to men."

Ugh-lomi stood regarding them. He had had dreams—he knew that though he had killed Uya, Uya still existed. And now they told him Uya was a Lion.

The shrivelled old woman, the mistress of the fire-minders, suddenly turned and spoke softly to those next to her. She was a very old woman indeed, she had been the first of Uya's wives, and he he had let her live beyond the age to which it is seemly a woman should be permitted to live. She had been cunning from the first, cunning to please Uya and to get food. And now she was great in counsel. She spoke softly, and Ugh-lomi watched her shrivelled form across the river with a curious distaste. Then she called aloud, "Come over to us, Ugh-lomi."

A GIRL suddenly lifted up her voice. "Come over to us, Ugh-lomi," she said. And they all began crying, "Come over to us, Ugh-lomi."

It was strange how their manner changed after the old woman called.

He stood quite still watching them all. It was pleasant to be called, and the girl who had called first was a pretty one. But she made him think of Eudena.

"Come over to us, Ugh-lomi," they cried, and the voice of the shrivelled old woman rose above them all. At the sound of her voice his hesitation returned.

He stood on the river bank, Ugh-lomi—Ugh the Thinker—with his thoughts slowly taking shape. Presently one and then another paused to see what he would do. He was minded to go back, he was minded not to. Suddenly his fear or his caution got the upper hand. Without answering them he turned, and walked back towards the distant thorn-trees, the way he had come. Forthwith the whole tribe started crying to him again very eagerly. He hesitated and turned, then he went on, then he turned again, and then once again, regarding them with troubled eyes as they called. The last time he took two paces back, before his fear stopped him. They saw him stop once more, and suddenly shake his head and vanish among the hawthorn-trees.

Then all the women and children lifted up their voices together, and called to him in one last vain effort.

Far down the river the reeds were stirring in the breeze, where, convenient for his new sort of feeding, the old lion, who had taken to man-eating, had made his lair.

The old woman turned her face that way, and pointed to the hawthorn thickets. "Uya," she screamed, "there goes thine enemy! There goes thine enemy, Uya! Why do you devour us nightly? We have tried to snare him! There goes thine enemy, Uya!"

But the lion who preyed upon the tribe was taking his siesta. The cry went unheard. That day he had dined on one of the plumper girls, and his mood was a comfortable placidity. He really did not understand that he was Uya or that Ugh-lomi was his enemy.

So it was that Ugh-lomi rode the horse, and heard first of Uya the lion, who had taken the place of Uya the Master, and was eating up the tribe. And as he hurried back to the gorge his mind was no longer full of the horse, but of the thought that Uya was still alive, to slay or be slain. Over and over again he saw the shrunken band of women and children crying that Uya was a lion. Uya was a lion!

And presently, fearing the twilight might come upon him, Ugh-lomi began running.

CHAPTER IV

Uya the Lion

THE old lion was in luck. The tribe had a certain pride in their ruler, but that was all the satisfaction they got out of it. He came the very night that Ugh-lomi killed Uya the Cunning, and so it was they named him Uya. It was the old woman, the fire-minder, who first named him Uya. A shower had lowered the fires to a glow, and made the night dark. And as they conversed together, and peered at one another in the darkness, and wondered fearfully what Uya would do to them in their dreams now that he was dead, they heard the mounting reverberations of the lion's roar close at hand. Then everything was still.

They held their breath, so that almost the only sounds were the patter of the rain and the hiss of the raindrops in the ashes. And then, after an interminable time, a crash, and a shriek of fear, and a growling. They sprang to their feet, shouting, screaming, running this way and that, but brands would not burn, and in a minute the victim was being dragged away through the ferns. It was Irk, the brother of Wau.

So the lion came.

The ferns were still wet from the rain the next night, and he came and took Click with the red hair. That sufficed for two nights. And then in the dark between the moons he came three nights, night after night, and that though they had good fires. He was an old lion with stumpy teeth, but very silent and very cool; he knew of fires before; these were not the first of mankind that had ministered to his old age. The third night he came between the outer fire and the inner, and he leapt the flint heap, and pulled down Irm the son of Irk, who had seemed like to be the leader. That was a dreadful night, because they lit great flares of fern and ran screaming, and the lion missed his hold of Irm. By the glare of the fire they saw Irm struggle up, and run a little way towards them, and then the lion in two bounds had him down again. That was the last of Irm.

So fear came, and all the delight of spring passed out of their lives. Already there were five gone out of the tribe, and four nights added three more to the number. Food-seeking became spiritless, none knew who might go next, and all day the women toiled, even the favourite women, gathering litter and sticks for the night fires. And the hunters hunted ill: in the warm spring-time hunger came again as though it was still winter. The tribe might have moved, had they had a leader, but they had no leader, and none knew where to go that the lion could not follow them. So the old lion waxed fat and thanked heaven for the kindly race of men. Two of the children and a youth died while the moon was

still new, and then it was the shrivelled old fire-minder first bethought herself in a dream of Eudena and Ugh-lomi, and of the way Uya had been slain. She had lived in fear of Uya all her days, and now she lived in fear of the lion. That Ugh-lomi could kill Uya for good—Ugh-lomi whom she had seen born—was impossible. It was Uya still seeking his enemy!

And then came the strange return of Ugh-lomi, a wonderful animal seen galloping far across the river, that suddenly changed into two animals, a horse and a man. Following this portent, the vision of Ugh-lomi on the farther bank of the river. . . . Yes, it was all plain to her. Uya was punishing them, because they had not hunted down Ugh-lomi and Eudena.

The men came straggling back to the chances of the night while the sun was still golden in the sky. They were received with the story of Ugh-lomi. She went across the river with them and showed them his spoor hesitating on the farther bank. Siss the Tracker knew the feet for Ugh-lomi's. "Uya needs Ugh-lomi," cried the old woman, standing on the left of the bend, a gesticulating figure of flaring bronze in the sunset. Her cries were strange sounds, flitting to and fro on the borderland of speech, but this was the sense they carried: "The lion needs Eudena. He comes night after night seeking Eudena and Ugh-lomi. When he cannot find Eudena and Ugh-lomi, he grows angry and he kills. Hunt Eudena and Ugh-lomi, Eudena whom he pursued, and Ugh-lomi for whom he gave the death-word! Hunt Eudena and Ugh-lomi!"

She turned to the distant reed-bed, as sometimes she had turned to Uya in his life. "Is it not so, my lord?" she cried. And, as if in answer, the tall reeds bowed before a breath of wind.

Far into the twilight the sound of hacking was heard from the squatting-places. It was the men sharpening their ashen spears against the hunting of the morrow. And in the night, early before the moon rose, the lion came and took the girl of Siss the Tracker.

In the morning before the sun had risen, Siss the Tracker, and the lad Wau-hau, who now chipped flints, and One Eye, and Bo, and the snail-eater, the two red-haired men, and Cat's-skin and Snake, all the men that were left alive of the Sons of Uya, taking their ash spears and their smiting-stones, and with throwing stones in the beast-paw bags, started forth upon the trail of Ugh-lomi through the hawthorn thickets where Yaaa the Rhinoceros and his brothers were feeding, and up the bare downland towards the beechwoods.

That night the fires burnt high and fierce, as the waxing moon set, and the lion left the crouching women and children in peace.

And the next day, while the sun was still high, the hunters returned—all save One Eye, who lay dead with a smashed skull at the foot of the ledge.

When Ugh-lomi came back that evening from stalking the horses, he found the vultures already busy over him. And with them the hunters brought Eudena bruised and wounded, but alive. That had been the strange order of the shrivelled old woman, that she was to be brought alive—"She is no kill for us. She is for Uya the Lion." Her hands were tied with thongs, as though she had been a man, and she came weary and drooping—her hair over her eyes and matted with blood. They walked about her, and ever and again the Snail-Eater, whose name she had given, would laugh and strike her with his ashen spear. And after he had struck her with his spear, he would look over his shoulder like one who had done an over-bold deed. The others, too, looked over their shoulders ever and again, and all were in a hurry save Eudena. When the old woman saw them coming, she cried aloud with joy.

They made Eudena cross the river with her hands tied, although the current was strong, and when she slipped the old woman screamed, first with joy and then for fear she might be drowned. And when they had dragged Eudena to shore, she could not stand for a time, albeit they beat her sore. So they let her sit with her feet touching the water, and her eyes staring before her, and her face set, whatever they might do or say. All the tribe came down to the squatting-place, even curly little Haha, who as yet could scarcely toddle, and stood staring at Eudena and the old woman, as now we should stare at some strange wounded beast and its captor.

THE old woman tore off the necklace of Uya that was about Eudena's neck, and put it on herself—she had been the first to wear it. Then she tore at Eudena's hair, and took a spear from Siss and beat her with all her might. And when she had vented the warmth of her heart on the girl she looked closely into her face. Eudena's eyes were closed and her features were set, and she lay so still that for a moment the old woman feared she was dead. And then her nostrils quivered. At that the old woman slapped her face and laughed and gave the spear to Siss again, and went a little way off from her and began to talk and jeer at her after her manner.

The old woman had more words than any in the tribe And her talk was a terrible thing to hear. Sometimes she screamed and moaned incoherently, and sometimes the shape of her guttural cries was the mere phantom of thoughts But she conveyed to Eudena, nevertheless, much of the things that were yet to come, of the Lion and of the torment he would do her. "And Ugh-lomi! Ha, ha! Ugh lomi is slain?"

And suddenly Eudena's eyes opened and she sat up again, and her look met the old woman's fair and level. "No," she said slowly, like one trying to remember, "I did not see my Ugh-lomi slain. I did not see my Ugh-lomi slain."

"Tell her," cried the old woman. "Tell her—he that killed him. Tell her how Ugh-lomi was slain."

She looked, and all the women and children there looked, from man to man.

None answered her. They stood shamefaced.

"Tell her," said the old woman. The men looked at one another.

Eudena's face suddenly lit.

"Tell her," she said. "Tell her, mighty men! Tell her the killing of Ugh-lomi."

The old woman rose and struck her sharply across her mouth.

"We could not find Ugh-lomi," said Siss the Tracker, slowly. "Who hunts two, kills none."

Then Eudena's heart leapt, but she kept her face hard. It was as well, for the old woman looked at her sharply, with murder in her eyes.

Then the old woman turned her tongue upon the

men because they had feared to go on after Ugh-lomi. She dreaded no one now Uya was slain. She scolded them as one scolds children. And they scowled at her, and began to accuse one another. Until suddenly Siss the Tracker raised his voice and bade her hold her peace.

And so when the sun was setting they took Eudena and went—though their hearts sank within them—along the trail the old lion had made in the reeds. All the men went together. At one place was a group of alders, and here they hastily bound Eudena where the lion might find her when he came abroad in the twilight, and having done so they hurried back until they were near the squatting-place. Then they stopped. Siss stopped first and looked back again at the alders. They could see her head, even from the squatting-place, a little black shock under the limb of the larger tree. That was as well.

All the women and children stood watching upon the crest of the mound. And the old woman stood and screamed for the lion to take her whom he sought, and counselled him on the torments he might do her.

Eudena was very weary now, stunned by beatings and fatigue and sorrow, and only the fear of the thing that was still to come upheld her. The sun was broad and blood-red between the stems of the distant chestnuts, and the west was all on fire; the evening breeze had died to a warm tranquillity. The air was full of midge swarms, the fish in the river hard by would leap at times, and now and again a cockchafer would drone through the air. Out of the corner of her eye Eudena could see a part of the squatting-knoll, and little figures standing and staring at her. And—a very little sound but very clear—she could hear the beating of the firestone. Dark and near to her and still was the reed-fringed thicket of the lair.

Presently the firestone ceased. She looked for the sun and found he had gone, and overhead and growing brighter was the waxing moon. She looked towards the thicket of the lair, seeking shapes in the reeds, and then suddenly she began to wriggle and wriggle, weeping and calling upon Ugh-lomi.

But Ugh-lomi was far away. When they saw her head moving with her struggles, they shouted together on the knoll, and she desisted and was still. And then came the bats, and the star that was like Ugh-lomi crept out of its blue hiding-place in the west. She called to it, but softly, because she feared the lion. And all through the coming of the twilight the thicket was still.

SO the dark crept upon Eudena, and the moon grew bright, and the shadows of things that had fled up the hillside and vanished with the evening came back to them short and black. And the dark shapes in the thicket of reeds and alders where the lion lay, gathered, and a faint stir began there. But nothing came out therefrom all through the gathering of the darkness.

She looked at the squatting-place and saw the fires glowing smoky-red, and the men and women going to and fro. The other way, over the river, a white mist was rising. Then far away came the whimpering of young foxes and the yell of a hyæna.

There were long gaps of aching waiting. After a long time some animal splashed in the water, and seemed to cross the river at the ford beyond the lair, but what animal it was she could not see. From the distant drinking-pools she could hear the sound of splashing, and the noise of elephants—so still was the night.

The earth was now a colourless arrangement of white reflections and impenetrable shadows, under the blue sky. The silvery moon was already spotted with the filigree crests of the chestnut woods, and over the shadowy eastward hills the stars were multiplying. The knoll fires were bright red now, and black figures stood waiting against them. They were waiting for a scream. . . . Surely it would be soon.

The night suddenly seemed full of movement. She held her breath. Things were passing—one, two, three—subtly sneaking shadows. . . . Jackals.

Then a long waiting again.

Then, asserting itself as real at once over all the sounds her mind had imagined, came a stir in the thicket, then a vigorous movement. There was a snap. The reeds crashed heavily, once, twice, thrice, and then everything was still save a measured swishing. She heard a low tremulous growl, and then everything was still again. The stillness lengthened—would it never end? She held her breath; she bit her lips to stop screaming. Then something scuttled through the undergrowth. Her scream was involuntary. She did not hear the answering yell from the mound.

Immediately the thicket woke up to vigorous movement again. She saw the grass stems waving in the light of the setting moon, the alders swaying. She struggled violently—her last struggle. But nothing came towards her. A dozen monsters seemed rushing about in that little place for a couple of minutes, and then again came silence. The moon sank behind the distant chestnuts and the night was dark.

Then an odd sound, a sobbing panting, that grew faster and fainter. Yet another silence, and then dim sounds and the grunting of some animal.

Everything was still again. Far away eastwards an elephant trumpeted, and from the woods came a snarling and yelping that died away.

In the long interval the moon shone out again, between the stems of the trees on the ridge, sending two great bars of light and a bar of darkness across the reedy waste. Then came a steady rustling, a splash, and the reeds swayed wider and wider apart. And at last they broke open, cleft from root to crest. . . . The end had come.

She looked to see the thing that had come out of the reeds. For a moment it seemed certainly the great head and jaw she expected, and then it dwindled and changed. It was a dark low thing, that remained silent, but it was not the lion. It became still—everything became still. She peered. It was like some gigantic frog, two limbs and a slanting body. Its head moved about searching the shadows.

A RUSTLE, and it moved clumsily, with a sort of hopping. And as it moved it gave a low groan.

The blood rushing through her veins was suddenly joy. *"Ugh-lomi!"* she whispered.

The thing stopped. *"Eudena,"* he answered softly with pain in his voice, and peering into the alders.

He moved again, and came out of the shadow beyond the reeds into the moonlight. All his body was covered with dark smears. She saw he was dragging his legs, and that he gripped his axe, the

first axe, in one hand. In another moment he had struggled into the position of all fours, and had staggered over to her. "The lion," he said in a strange mingling of exultation and anguish. "Wau! —I have slain a lion. With my own hand. Even as I slew the great bear." He moved to emphasize his words, and suddenly broke off with a faint cry. For a space he did not move.

"Let me free," whispered Eudena. . . .

He answered her no words but pulled himself up from his crawling attitude by means of the alder stem, and hacked at her thongs with the sharp edge of his axe. She heard him sob at each blow. He cut away the thongs about her chest and arms, and then his hand dropped. His chest struck against her shoulder and he slipped down beside her and lay still.

But the rest of her release was easy. Very hastily she freed herself. She made one step from the tree, and her head was spinning. Her last conscious movement was towards him. She reeled, and dropped. Her hand fell upon his thigh. It was soft and wet, and gave way under her pressure; he cried out at her touch, and writhed and lay still again.

Presently a dark dog-like shape came very softly through the reeds. Then stopped dead and stood sniffing, hesitated, and at last turned and slunk back into the shadows.

Long was the time they remained there motionless, with the light of the setting moon shining on their limbs. Very slowly, as slowly as the setting of the moon, did the shadow of the reeds towards the mound flow over them. Presently their legs were hidden, and Ugh-lomi was but a bust of silver. The shadow crept to his neck, crept over his face, and so at last the darkness of the night swallowed them up.

The shadow became full of instinctive stirrings. There was a patter of feet, and a faint snarling—the sound of a blow.

THERE was little sleep that night for the women and children at the squatting-place until they heard Eudena scream. But the men were weary and sat dozing. When Eudena screamed they felt assured of their safety, and hurried to get the nearest places to the fires. The old woman laughed at the scream, and laughed again because Si, the little friend of Eudena, whimpered. Directly the dawn came they were all alert and looking towards the alders. They could see that Eudena had been taken. They could not help feeling glad to think that Uya was appeased. But across the minds of the men the thought of Ugh-lomi fell like a shadow. They could understand revenge, for the world was old in revenge, but they did not think of rescue. Suddenly a hyæna fled out of the thicket, and came galloping across the reed space. His muzzle and paws were dark-stained. At that sight all the men shouted and clutched at throwing-stones and ran towards him, for no animal is so pitiful a coward as the hyæna by day. All men hated the hyæna because he preyed on children, and would come and bite when one was sleeping on the edge of the squatting-place. And Cat's-skin, throwing fair and straight, hit the brute shrewdly on the flank, whereat the whole tribe yelled with delight.

At the noise they made there came a flapping of wings from the lair of the lion, and three white-headed vultures rose slowly and circled and came to rest amidst the branches of an alder, overlooking the lair. "Our lord is abroad," said the old woman, pointing. "The vultures have their share of Eudena." For a space they remained there, and then first one and then another dropped back into the thicket.

Then over the eastern woods, and touching the whole world to life and colour, poured, with the exaltation of a trumpet blast, the light of the rising sun. At the sight of him the children shouted together, and clapped their hands and began to race off towards the water. Only little Si lagged behind and looked wonderingly at the alders where she had seen the head of Eudena overnight.

But Uya, the old lion, was not abroad, but at home, and he lay very still, and a little on one side. He was not in his lair, but a little way from it in a place of trampled grass. Under one eye was a little wound, the feeble little bite of the first axe. But all the ground beneath his chest was ruddy brown with a vivid streak, and in his chest was a little hole that had been made by Ugh-lomi's stabbing-spear. Along his side and at his neck the vultures had marked their claims. For so Ugh-lomi had slain him, lying stricken under his paw and thrusting haphazard at his chest. He had driven the spear in with all his strength and stabbed the giant to the heart. So it was the reign of the lion, of the second incarnation of Uya the Master, came to an end.

From the knoll the bustle of preparation grew, the hacking of spears and throwing-stones. None spake the name of Ugh-lomi for fear that it might bring him. The men were going to keep together, close together, in the hunting for a day or so. And their hunting was to be Ugh-lomi, lest instead he should come a-hunting them.

But Ugh-lomi was lying very still and silent, outside the lion's lair, and Eudena squatted beside him, with the ash spear, all smeared with lion's blood, gripped in her hand.

CHAPTER V.

The Fight in the Lion's Thicket

UGH-LOMI lay still, his back against an alder, and his thigh was a red mass terrible to see. No civilized man could have lived who had been so sorely wounded, but Eudena got him thorns to close his wounds, and squatted beside him day and night, smiting the flies from him with a fan of reeds by day, and in the night threatening the hyænas with the first axe in her hand; and in a little while he began to heal. It was high summer, and there was no rain. Little food they had during the first two days his wounds were open. In the low place where they hid were no roots nor little beasts, and the stream, with its water-snails and fish, was in the open a hundred yards away. She could not go abroad by day for fear of the tribe, her brothers and sisters, nor by night for fear of the beasts, both on his account and hers. So they shared the lion with the vultures. But there was a trickle of water near by, and Eudena brought him plenty in her hands.

Where Ugh-lomi lay was well hidden from the tribe by a thicket of alders, and all fenced about with bulrushes and tall reeds. The dead lion he had

killed lay near his old lair on a place of trampled reeds fifty yards away, in sight through the reed-stems, and the vultures fought each other for the choicest pieces and kept the jackals off him. Very soon a cloud of flies that looked like bees hung over him, and Ugh-lomi could hear their humming. And when Ugh-lomi's flesh was already healing—and it was not many days before that began—only a few bones of the lion remained scattered and shining white.

For the most part Ugh-lomi sat still during the day, looking before him at nothing, sometimes he would mutter of the horses and bears and lions, and sometimes he would beat the ground with the first axe and say the names of the tribe—he seemed to have no fear of bringing the tribe—for hours together. But chiefly he slept, dreaming little because of his loss of blood and the slightness of his food. During the short summer night both kept awake. All the while darkness lasted things moved about them, things they never saw by day. For some nights the hyænas did not come, and then one moonless night near a dozen came and fought for what was left of the lion. The night was a tumult of growling, and Ugh-lomi and Eudena could hear the bones snap in their teeth. But they knew the hyæna dare not attack any creature alive and awake, and so they were not greatly afraid.

Of a daytime Eudena would go along the narrow path the old lion had made in the reeds until she was beyond the bend, and then she would creep into the thicket and watch the tribe. She would lie close by the alders where they had bound her to offer her up to the lion, and thence she could see them on the knoll by the fire, small and clear, as she had seen them that night. But she told Ugh-lomi little of what she saw, because she feared to bring them by their names. For so they believed in those days, that naming called.

She saw the men prepare stabbing-spears and throwing-stones on the morning after Ugh-lomi had slain the lion, and go out to hunt him, by leaving the women and children on the knoll. Little they knew how near he was as they tracked off in single file towards the hills, with Siss the Tracker leading them. And she watched the women and children, after the men had gone, gathering fern-fronds and twigs for the night fire, and the boys and girls running and playing together. But the very old woman made her feel afraid. Towards noon, when most of the others were down at the stream by the bend, she came and stood on the hither side of the knoll, a gnarled brown figure, and gesticulated so that Eudena could scarce believe she was not seen. Eudena lay like a hare in its form, with shining eyes fixed on the bent witch away there, and presently she dimly understood it was the lion the old woman was worshipping—the lion Ugh-lomi had slain.

AND the next day the hunters came back weary, carrying a fawn, and Eudena watched the feast enviously. And then came a strange thing. She saw—distinctly she heard—the old woman shrieking and gesticulating and pointing towards her. She was afraid, and crept like a snake out of sight again. But presently curiosity overcame her and she was back at her spying-place, and as she peered her heart stopped, for there were all the men, with their weapons in their hands, walking together towards her from the knoll.

She dared not move lest her movement should be seen, but she pressed herself close to the ground. The sun was low and the golden light was in the faces of the men. She saw they carried a piece of rich red meat thrust through by an ashen stake. Presently they stopped. "Go on!" screamed the old woman. Cat's-skin grumbled, and they came on, searching the thicket with sun-dazzled eyes. "Here!" said Siss. And they took the ashen stake with the meat upon it and thrust it into the ground. "Uya!" cried Siss, "behold thy portion. And Ugh-lomi we have slain. Of a truth we have slain Ugh-lomi. This day we slew Ugh-lomi, and to-morrow we will bring his body to you." And the others repeated the words.

They looked at each other and behind them, and partly turned and began going back. At first they walked half turned to the thicket, then facing the mound they walked faster looking over their shoulders, then faster; soon they ran, it was a race at last, until they were near the knoll. Then Siss who was hindmost was first to slacken his pace.

The sunset passed and the twilight came, the fires glowed red against the hazy blue of the distant chestnut-trees, and the voices over the mound were merry. Eudena lay scarcely stirring, looking from the mound to the meat and then to the mound. She was hungry, but she was afraid. At last she crept back to Ugh-lomi.

He looked round at the little rustle of her approach. His face was in shadow. "Have you got me some food?" he said.

She said she could find nothing, but that she would seek further, and went back along the lion's path until she could see the mound again, but she could not bring herself to take the meat; she had the brute's instinct of a snare. She felt very miserable.

She crept back at last towards Ugh-lomi and heard him stirring and moaning. She turned back to the mound again; then she saw something in the darkness near the stake, and peering distinguished a jackal. In a flash she was brave and angry; she sprang up, cried out, and ran towards the offering. She stumbled and fell, and heard the growling of the jackal going off.

When she arose only the ashen stake lay on the ground, the meat was gone. So she went back, to fast through the night with Ugh-lomi; and Ugh-lomi was angry with her, because she had no food for him; but she told him nothing of the things she had seen.

Two days passed and they were near starving, when the tribe slew a horse. Then came the same ceremony, and a haunch was left on the ashen stake; but this time Eudena did not hesitate.

By acting and words she made Ugh-lomi understand, but he ate most of the food before he understood; and then as her meaning passed to him he grew merry with his food. "I am Uya," he said; "I am the Lion. I am the Great Cave Bear, I who was only Ugh-lomi. I am Wau the Cunning. It is well that they should feed me, for presently I will kill them all."

Then Eudena's heart was light, and she laughed with him; and afterwards she ate what he had left of the horseflesh with gladness.

After that it was he had a dream, and the next

day he made Eudena bring him the lion's teeth and claws—so much of them as she could find—and hack him a club of alder. And he put the teeth and claws very cunningly into the wood so that the points were outward. Very long it took him, and he blunted two of the teeth hammering them in, and was very angry and threw the thing away; but afterwards he dragged himself to where he had thrown it and finished it—a club of a new sort set with teeth. That day there was more meat for them both, an offering to the lion from the tribe.

It was one day—more than hand's fingers of days, more than anyone had skill to count—after Ugh-lomi had made the club, that Eudena while he was asleep was lying in the thicket watching the squatting-place. There had been no meat for three days. And the old woman came and worshipped after her manner. Now while she worshipped, Eudena's little friend Si and another, the child of the first girl Siss had loved, came over the knoll and stood regarding her skinny figure, and presently they began to mock her. Eudena found this entertaining, but suddenly the old woman turned on them quickly and saw them. For a moment she stood and they stood motionless, and then with a shriek of rage, she rushed towards them, and all three disappeared over the crest of the knoll.

PRESENTLY the children reappeared among the ferns beyond the shoulder of the hill. Little Si ran first, for she was an active girl, and the other child ran squealing with the old woman close upon her. And over the knoll came Siss with a bone in his hand, and Bo and Cat's-skin obsequiously behind him, each holding a piece of food, and they laughed aloud and shouted to see the old woman so angry. And with a shriek the child was caught and the old woman set to work slapping and the child screaming, and it was very good after-dinner fun for them. Little Si ran on a little way and stopped at last between fear and curiosity.

And suddenly came the mother of the child, with hair streaming, panting, and with a stone in her hand, and the old woman turned about like a wild cat. She was the equal of any woman, was the chief of the fire-minders, in spite of her years; but before she could do anything Siss shouted to her and the clamour rose loud. Other shock heads came into sight. It seemed the whole tribe was at home and feasting. But the old woman dared not go on wreaking herself on the child Siss befriended.

Everyone made noises and called names—even little Si. Abruptly the old woman let go of the child and made a swift run at Si, for Si had no friends; and Si, realizing her danger when it was almost upon her, made off headlong, with a faint cry of terror, not heeding whither she ran, straight to the lair of the lion. She swerved aside into the reeds presently, realizing now whither she went.

But the old woman was a wonderful old woman, as active as she was spiteful, and she caught Si by the streaming hair within thirty yards of Eudena. All the tribe now was running down the knoll and shouting and laughing ready to see the fun.

Then something stirred in Eudena; something that had never stirred in her before; and, thinking all of little Si and nothing of her fear, she sprang up from her ambush and ran swiftly forward. The old woman did not see her, for she was busy beating little Si's face with her hand, beating with all her heart, and suddenly something hard and heavy struck her cheek. She went reeling, and saw Eudena with flaming eyes and cheeks between her and little Si. She shrieked with astonishment and terror, and little Si, not understanding, set off towards the gaping tribe. They were quite close now, for the sight of Eudena had driven their fading fear of the lion out of their heads.

In a moment Eudena had turned from the cowering old woman and overtaken Si. "Si!" she cried, "Si!" She caught the child up in her arms as it stopped, pressed the nail-lined face to hers, and turned about to run towards her lair, the lair of the old lion. The old woman stood waist-high in the reeds, and screamed foul things and inarticulate rage, but did not dare to intercept her; and at the bend of the path Eudena looked back and saw all the men of the tribe crying to one another and Siss coming at a trot along the lion's trail.

She ran straight along the narrow way through the reeds to the shady place where Ugh-lomi sat with his healing thigh, just awakened by the shouting and rubbing his eyes. She came to him, a woman, with little Si in her arms. Her heart throbbed in her throat. "Ugh-lomi!" she cried, "Ugh-lomi, the tribe comes!"

Ugh-lomi sat staring in stupid astonishment at her and Si.

She pointed with Si in one arm. She sought among her feeble store of words to explain. She could hear the men calling. Apparently they had stopped outside. She put down Si and caught up the new club with the lion's teeth, and put it into Ugh-lomi's hand, and ran three yards and picked up the first axe.

"Ah!" said Ugh-lomi, waving the new club, and suddenly he perceived the occasion and, rolling over, began to struggle to his feet.

He stood but clumsily. He supported himself by one hand against the tree, and just touched the ground gingerly with the toe of his wounded leg. In the other hand he gripped the new club. He looked at his healing thigh; and suddenly the reeds began whispering, and ceased and whispered again, and coming cautiously along the track, bending down and holding his fire-hardened stabbing-stick of ash in his hand, appeared Siss. He stopped dead, and his eyes met Ugh-lomi's.

UGH-LOMI forgot he had a wounded leg. He stood firmly on both feet. Something trickled. He glanced down and saw a little gout of blood had oozed out along the edge of the healing wound. He rubbed his hand there to give him the grip of his club, and fixed his eyes again on Siss.

"Wau!" he cried, and sprang forward, and Siss, still stooping and watchful, drove his stabbing-stick up very quickly in an ugly thrust. It ripped Ugh-lomi's guarding arm and the club came down in a counter that Siss was never to understand. He fell, as an ox falls to the pole-axe, at Ugh-lomi's feet.

To Bo it seemed the strangest thing. He had a comforting sense of tall reeds on either side, and an impregnable rampart, Siss, between him and any danger. Snail-eater was close behind and there was no danger there. He was prepared to shove behind and send Siss to death or victory. That was his place as second man. He saw the butt of the spear Siss carried leap away from him, and suddenly a

dull whack and the broad back fell away forward, and he looked Ugh-lomi in the face over his prostrate leader. It felt to Bo as if his heart had fallen down a well. He had a throwing-stone in one hand and an ashen stabbing-stick in the other. He did not live to the end of his momentary hesitation which to use.

Snail-eater was a readier man, and besides Bo did not fall forward as Siss had done, but gave at his knees and hips, crumpling up with the toothed club upon his head. The Snail-eater drove his spear forward swift and straight, and took Ugh-lomi in the muscle of the shoulder, and then he drove him hard with the smiting-stone in his other hand, shouting out as he did so. The new club swished ineffectually through the reeds. Eudena saw Ugh-lomi come staggering back from the narrow path into the open space, tripping over Siss and with a foot of ashen stake sticking out of him over his arm. And then the Snail-eater, whose name she had given, had his final injury from her, as his exultant face came out of the reeds after his spear. For she swung the first axe swift and high, and hit him fair and square on the temple; and down he went on Siss at prostrate Ugh-lomi's feet.

But before Ugh-lomi could get up, the two red-haired men were tumbling out of the reeds, spears and smiting-stones ready, and Snake hard behind them. One she struck on the neck, but not to fell him, and he blundered aside and spoilt his brother's blow at Ugh-lomi's head. In a moment Ugh-lomi dropped his club and had his assailant by the waist, and had pitched him sideways sprawling. He snatched at his club again and recovered it. The man Eudena had hit stabbed at her with his spear as he stumbled from her blow, and involuntarily she gave ground to avoid him. He hesitated between her and Ugh-lomi, half turned, gave a vague cry at finding Ugh-lomi so near, and in a moment Ugh-lomi had him by the throat, and the club had its third victim. As he went down Ugh-lomi shouted —no words, but an exultant cry.

The other red-haired man was six feet from her with his back to her, and a darker red streaking his head. He was struggling to his feet. She had an irrational impulse to stop his rising. She flung the axe at him, missed, saw his face in profile, and he had swerved beyond little Si, and was running through the reeds. She had a transitory vision of Snake standing in the throat of the path, half turned away from her, and then she saw his back. She saw the club whirling through the air, and the shock head of Ugh-lomi, with blood in the hair and blood upon the shoulder, vanishing below the reeds in pursuit. Then she heard Snake scream like a woman.

She ran past Si to where the handle of the axe stuck out of a clump of fern, and turning, found herself panting and alone with three motionless bodies. The air was full of shouts and screams. For a space she was sick and giddy, and then it came into her head that Ugh-lomi was being killed along the reed-path, and with an inarticulate cry she leapt over the body of Bo and hurried after him. Snake's feet lay across the path, and his head was among the reeds. She followed the path until it bent round and opened out by the alders, and thence she saw all that was left of the tribe in the open, scattering like dead leaves before a gale, and going back over the knoll. Ugh-lomi was hard upon Cat's-skin.

But Cat's-skin was fleet of foot and got away, and so did young Wau-Hau when Ugh-lomi turned upon him, and Ugh-lomi pursued Wau-Hau far beyond the knoll before he desisted. He had the rage of battle on him now, and the wood thrust through his shoulder stung him like a spur. When she saw he was in no danger she stopped running and stood panting, watching the distant active figures run up and vanish one by one over the knoll. In a little time she was alone again. Everything had happened very swiftly. The smoke of Brother Fire rose straight and steady from the squatting-place, just as it had done ten minutes ago, when the old woman had stood yonder worshipping the lion.

AND after a long time, as it seemed, Ugh-lomi reappeared over the knoll, and came back to Eudena, triumphant and breathing heavily. She stood, her hair about her eyes and hot-faced, with the blood-stained axe in her hand, at the place where the tribe had offered her as a sacrifice to the lion. "Wau!" cried Ugh-lomi at the sight of her, his face alight with the fellowship of battle, and he waved his new club, red now and hairy; and at the sight of his glowing face her tense pose relaxed somewhat, and she stood sobbing and rejoicing.

Ugh-lomi had a queer unaccountable pang at the sight of her tears; but he only shouted "Wau!" the louder and shook the axe east and west. He called manfully to her to follow him and turned back, striding, with the club swinging in his hand, towards the squatting-place, as if he had never left the tribe; and she ceased her weeping and followed quickly as a woman should.

So Ugh-lomi and Eudena came back to the squatting-place from which they had fled many days before from the face of Uya; and by the squatting-place lay a deer half eaten, just as there had been before Ugh-lomi was man or Eudena woman. So Ugh-lomi sat down to eat, and Eudena beside him like a man, and the rest of the tribe watched them from safe hiding-places. And after a time one of the elder girls came back timorously, carrying little Si in her arms, and Eudena called to them by name, and offered them food. But the elder girl was afraid and would not come, though Si struggled to come to Eudena. Afterwards, when Ugh-lomi had eaten, he sat dozing, and at last he slept, and slowly the others came out of the hiding-places and drew near. And when Ugh-lomi woke, save that there were no men to be seen, it seemed as though he had never left the tribe.

Now, there is a thing strange but true: that all through this fight Ugh-lomi forgot that he was lame, and was not lame, and after he had rested behold! he was a lame man; and he remained a lame man to the end of his days.

Cat's-skin and the second red-haired man and Wau-Hau, who chipped flints cunningly, as his father had done before him, fled from the face of Ugh-lomi, and none knew where they hid. But two days after they came and squatted a good way off from the knoll among the bracken under the chestnuts and watched. Ugh-lomi's rage had gone, he moved to go against them and did not, and at sundown they went away. That day, too, they found the old woman among the ferns, where Ugh-lomi had blundered upon her when she had pursued Wau-Hau. She was dead and more ugly than ever, but

(*Continued on page* 804)

The Astounding Discoveries of DOCTOR MENTIROSO

by A. Hyatt Verrill

Author of "Through the Crater's Rim," "The Plague of the Living Death," etc.

As he spoke, he ducked into his machine and drew the panel shut . . . I swayed on my feet! My head swam dizzily. Then suddenly remembering that I might be within his damnable fourth dimension limit, I sprang back and away from the black stone pedestal.

EDITOR of AMAZING STORIES,

DEAR SIR:

As a constant reader of AMAZING STORIES, I have always been greatly interested in the various opinions expressed by your readers regarding the stories which have been published. I have been particularly struck by the fact that no two seem to agree as to the best or worst stories, or as to the improbability or impossibility of the incidents related. Personally, I always feel that a story laid in the distant future, or on another planet, never seems to carry conviction, rather at the very outset taxes the credulity of the reader. But this is quite apart from the matter regarding which I am writing to you.

Among the many themes which have been criticised, and which many of your readers have declared impossible, are those dealing with the elimination of time, or which send the hero, if so he may be called, into the future or into the past. A short time ago I, too, agreed that it was utterly impossible and had no scientific foundation. And, were it not for your editorials in which you have so often pointed out that the impossibility of today may become the possibility of tomorrow, and have shown yourself so liberal and broadminded in your views, I would not now dare to address this communication to you with the expectation that you would give it the least serious consideration.

To be brief, and to the point: not only is it possible to eliminate time and enter either the past or the future; these things have actually been accomplished.

Do not think, when I make this bold statement, that I am of unsound mind, that I am perpetrating some new hoax, or that I am trying to put fiction in the form of fact. On the contrary, I am merely calling to your attention the remarkable and generally unknown feats of a friend of mine, a highly educated and eminently scientific gentleman, who for several years past, has held the position of instructor in applied physics in the second oldest university in America, the *Universidad Santo Tomas*, at Lima, Peru.

Dr. Fenomeno Mentiroso is, as anyone in Peru can testify, a man whose word and honor cannot be questioned. His works on the higher mathematics of physics and his clear and concise exposition of the Einstein Theory, which was first read as a paper before the fourth Pan-American Scientific Congress in Lima in 1924, are familiar to every scientist throughout the world. He would be the last man to attempt to foster a hoax or to allow his imagination to wander into unproven fields, but he is withal a very modest individual and dreads, more than anything else, lest any statement or declaration he may make should be considered fictional. And his latest exploit is so sensational, and to many persons will appear so utterly impossible, that he has absolutely refused to make public his discoveries or his unparalleled feat. Moreover, what he has done, is, as you will see, merely a beginning, and should full details of his work be made public, his further experiments and inventions might be greatly hampered. Still another reason that he has remained silent is that he expects that his remarkable invention, in its perfected form, will ultimately prove such an irresistible weapon of offense and defence, that his country will be forever free from any fear of hostilities on the part of its traditional and warlike neighbor, the Republic of Chile.

It was solely because of the numerous allegations, on the part of your readers, that time could never be eliminated, and my insistence that his own accomplishment would prove the fallacy of such statements, and would at the same time set at rest the question of a fourth dimension, that Doctor Mentiroso reluctantly gave me permission to relate the facts to you.

But as I am no scientist, save for the interest I take in your scientifiction tales, and as physics, higher mathematics and fourth dimensional problems are quite beyond me, I shall recount, verbatim, as far as possible, my conversation with Doctor Mentiroso.

SOME two months ago, during a visit to Lima, I had called, as I invariably do when in Peru, upon Doctor Mentiroso. I had just received a copy of AMAZING STORIES and somewhat jocularly presented it to the Doctor with the remark that it might give him some new ideas.

He glanced rather idly over the magazine, until his eye caught a page which instantly aroused his interest and indignation. "Idiots!" he exclaimed in his impulsive Latin way. "Idiots that people are! Did you read this, *Don Alfeo?*" Then, without awaiting my reply, he continued:

"Will the world never learn that there is no such word as impossible? Will people never cease to call 'impossible' everything they do not understand? Of a truth, my good friend, the stupidity of my fellow men at times makes me ashamed of the human race."

"What," I asked, "do you refer to now?"

"To these letters," he exclaimed, pointing to the paragraphs he had read. "To these letters wherein the writers, who obviously know nothing of the subject, find fault with *Señor* Wells' and other authors' stories because, they say, there is no fourth dimension and because it is impossible to be in the future or the past coincidently with one's existence in the present."

I laughed. "But that obviously *is* impossible," I replied. "And as for a fourth dimension,—why, *amigo mio*, how can there be any dimension other

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IF this story does not bring forth the greatest amount of applause from our readers that we have had since the magazine started, we will be willing to confess that we do not know their likings. The editor read this story three times in succession, and will probably read it a dozen times before he gets through with it. It is one of the most remarkable scientifiction stories that we have ever inspected. "Tremendous" is the one word that will do the story justice. You will be dizzy and gasping for breath before you get through it.

In this story our well-known author delves into the mysteries of time and it contains excellent science and excellent scientific facts throughout. Is it possible to step into the future? Is it possible to witness something now that happened yesterday? And is it possible to actually see something that will happen tomorrow?

The author shows you, by giving you obvious proofs, that all this is not only possible, but can apparently be done even now.

The big question mark however, remains: Is all this possible, or is it not? But read the story and see for yourself.

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than length, breadth and thickness? These stories, *Don* Fenomeno, are merely fiction, fiction glossed with science, it is true, but pure imagination none the less. You do not understand, perhaps, that they are not intended to be taken seriously."

The Doctor shrugged his shoulders and regarded me pityingly. "Fiction, I grant," he said, "but fiction only inasmuch as the names of persons and their particular adventures and feats are concerned. The basic facts in *Señor* Wells' story, and in the others also, are science. It is hard to explain to one who is unfamiliar with the involved theories of the great Einstein, of infinity and of electronic forces; but a fourth dimension is as essential to the universe and to science as is any one of the three recognized dimensions. And if a certain thing is essential to the universe, then, most truly, my friend, that thing exists."

"But," I objected, "if there *is* a fourth dimension, what is it? And why has no one discovered it?"

"It *has* been discovered," declared my friend positively. "I, Doctor Fenomeno Mentiroso, have discovered it. And I will try to explain to you what it is, though I doubt if you can grasp it, for so accustomed have men become to think of the existence of things which do not exist, that the ordinary mind cannot grasp the existence of matters which they think do not exist."

I threw up my hands in despair. "It's beyond me," I declared. "If a thing exists which doesn't exist, and things which exist do not exist, then we must all be mad and the whole world must be topsy-turvy."

"On the contrary," he continued, smiling pityingly at my apparent ignorance. "It would be madness *not* to admit such obvious truths. You dream, my friend, and as you dream all that occurs is to your brain real and existent, and yet, when you wake, you feel convinced that your dreams were unreal, that nothing existed in them and that only during your waking hours do your senses record matters which truly exist. But suppose, if you can, that matters are in reality reversed, that your dreams are actualities and your impressions during waking hours phantasies. Or imagine again, that both your dreams and your waking-hour experiences are both equally real, but that, during your slumbers, you enter into another sphere, into the unknown, unexplored realm of a fourth dimension. What proof have you that your dreams are not as existent as your other impressions? None! my friend, not a shred of proof; merely the fact that for generations we have been taught that dreams were imaginary figments of the brain. It is just as true of countless other matters. Does space exist? Do length, breath and thickness exist?"

"Of course," I interrupted. "Otherwise no object, neither you nor I, could exist, and geometry and other mathematics could not exist. I—"

"PARDON me," he broke in, smiling deprecatingly. "But are you *quite* sure of that? A mathematical line, a mathematical plane, does not exist, and hence a mathematical cube or parallelogram cannot exist, and, if we accept *Señor* Einstein's theory, two parallel lines *will* eventually meet. The fact is, my friend, that we—or most of us at least—cannot grasp the infinite. We are bound down, tied hand and foot to our own petty sphere, to this earth of ours which is an infinitesimal atom in the universe, and we measure everything by earthly standards and by our own five senses. We can conceive of nothing that we cannot smell, taste, touch, see or hear. No living man can conceive or describe any form totally unlike anything on earth. No man can conceive or describe a color or a sound unlike anything he has ever seen or heard. Did you ever think of that, *amigo mio?* And only a comparatively few men can realize that there is—scientifically speaking—no such thing as solid matter. A few years ago, a thousand things in common use today would have been scoffed at as impossible. Even today it is hard for the average man to understand radio, to understand why an airplane flies, and it is still harder to realize that objects which we speak of as solids are merely the result of combinations of electrons and protons. And it is a thousand times more difficult for the average man to conceive of everything being, as is unquestionably the case, merely the result of vibratory waves."

"Hold on!" I exclaimed. "You are getting beyond me, and I cannot see where your highly entertaining lecture is leading. What has all this to do with the elimination of space? And how can matter be composed of waves?" Doctor Mentiroso sighed and shrugged his shoulders expressively.

"I forget, dear friend, that you are an example of the average man," he laughed. "All that I have said has a direct bearing on the elimination of space and the fourth dimension. But to answer your last question. We know that light, heat, sound, electricity, radio, color, smell are all the result of vibratory waves. And beyond question there are countless thousands of vibratory waves too short or too long to be received or intercepted by the human organs. Heat vibrations are invisible until they are reduced to a length perceptible to the eye. Light vibrations are not detectable by the sense of touch or feeling until they are lengthened to the point where they are known as heat. Only a small percentage of sound vibrations are within the range of the human ear, and electro-magnetic vibrations cannot be detected by any human organ until so altered as to become sound waves."

I shook my head. "Before you proceed," I begged, "can you make this a bit clearer? You say that heat vibrations can be made visible, that light waves can be made detectable by touch. How?"

"If," replied *Don* Fenomeno, speaking slowly and choosing his words, "if you heat a bar of iron up to a certain point it will burn wood or your skin, and yet you cannot detect its heat by your eyesight. But if heated slightly more, it becomes red, and you know it is 'red hot,' as you say, because you see it. In other words, you have gradually decreased the length of the heat vibrations until they become visible. If the iron is heated still more, the red becomes white, or in other words the vibrations have been shortened until they appear as white light to your eyes. Conversely, the white or red vibrations may be lengthened to invisible heat rays by allowing the metal to cool. In other words, light waves are lengthened until they become invisible but recognizable by touch and are considered heat."

"Then," said I, quite pleased with myself, "according to your theory, light and heat are identical."

"In a way, yes," replied *Don* Mentiroso. "But, in

the same way, all vibrations are identical, for all are caused merely by the movement of electrons—forcing more electrons into a given space or depriving some space of its normal number of electrons. Possibly your mind cannot conceive the fact, but nevertheless, every force, every power, every motion, every body, and in fact everything we know—perhaps our thoughts, our senses and our so-called life—are merely the results of electronic motion."

"Well, even if I grant all this, what has it to do with the original subject of our discussion?" I demanded.

"Everything," declared my friend. "Granted that everything is the result of electronic movement, and you know, of course, that the electrons are in effect miniature satellites revolving about a central nucleus, much as the earth and moon revolve about the sun, then we must admit that nothing actual, as we know it, exists; that everything is merely relative and that time itself must be the mere expression, in arbitrary terms, of some electronic force or vibratory waves."

"Nonsense," I exclaimed. "I suppose you will be claiming that time does not exist."

"I KNOW it does not," was his astounding reply. "It is merely a relative term coined for the convenience of the human race. But permit me to proceed. I will demonstrate this to you presently. You asked about the fourth dimension a moment ago. Now let me ask you a question. Has a circle length, breadth or thickness?"

"Why, of—" I hesitated. "Certainly," I declared after a moment's thought. "A wheel or a disk has thickness, and its diameter is its breadth."

Doctor Mentiroso laughed. "Right," he agreed. "But neither a wheel nor a disk is a circle; it is merely an object or form *bounded* by a circle. What is the definition of a circle. A mathematical plane with its boundary equidistant from its centre everywhere. Did not your geometry attempt to solve all problems by dividing the circle into triangles? And yet a triangle has three straight boundaries, whereas a circle has no portion of its boundary or circumference straight. In other words, *amigo mio,* as a circle possesses neither length, breadth nor thickness, it must of necessity possess a fourth dimension, and the mathematicians, knowing nothing of a fourth dimension, must of necessity fit their geometry to the occasion and attempt crudely to transform it into triangles which have length and breadth. And yet circles may be transformed to length or breadth just as triangles or parallelograms may be transformed into cubes or pyramids." "Then," I laughed, "you consider the circle the fourth dimension?" "Not at all," he exclaimed a bit impatiently. "I am merely trying to demonstrate to you that a fourth dimension *must* exist or otherwise there could be no circles and consequently no spheres and consequently, no revolutions or rotations of electrons, atoms, stellar bodies or anything else. The earth could not rotate on its axis, it could not follow its orbit about the sun, for none of these things would be possible with the existence of length, breadth and thickness alone, with parallel lines which never meet and with mathematical planes. No, my friend, the fourth dimension exists, it is ever present, it is essential to our lives, to our existence and to our universe, but being as yet inconceivable to us, we cannot describe it, measure it or understand it. It is, in fact, beyond our present senses, just as the higher and lower sound vibrations, the shorter and longer light waves, and the radio waves are undetectable by our organs."

"That is a safe way of putting it," I said. "Of course, if we assume that no one can detect it, then no one can be positive that it does *not* exist. But don't you think all that is negative evidence? And how does it affect the question of time elimination, of going into the past or future while still in the present, which was, *Don* Fenomeno, the original matter under discussion?"

"I presume," he replied after a moment's thought, "that you do not consider it possible to enter the future, while still in the present."

"I certainly do not," I assured him. "If that were possible, one might foretell with certainty what would occur tomorrow or a year hence."

"Precisely," he agreed. "And what if I assure you that you or I *can* foretell what will occur in the future."

"I should think, my friend, that you were absolutely mad," I replied.

Don Fenomeno arose, crossed the room to a table, and returned with a copy of *El Tiempo* in his hand. Glancing over it, he pointed to a paragraph and handed the newspaper to me.

"Will you be good enough to read that news item?" he asked.

"Nothing remarkable," I declared, as my eyes glanced over the indicated paragraph. "Merely the report of a railway accident in India, and the death of sixteen persons."

"Quite so," agreed Doctor Fenomeno. "And when is the despatch dated?"

"December 18th," I replied.

"And does it state at what hour the accident occurred?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, reading from the paragraph, "at seven P. M. today the Jarabad local train which left Marajpore at 5.30 . . ."

"Enough," he interrupted. "The accident, then, occurred at 7 P. M. of December 18th. Will you glance at the date at the top of the page and tell me on what day this copy of *El Tiempo* was printed?"

"Why, on the 18th, of course," I replied.

"Exactly," he smiled, "and as you know, *El Tiempo* is on the streets of Lima at 6 A. M. Hence a paper sold on Lima's streets at 6 A. M. contained news of a railway accident in India which did not occur until 7 P. M. of the same day. In other words, *El Tiempo* foretold exactly what would occur in another part of the world thirteen hours before the event took place. And yet," he added, shrugging his shoulder, "you assure me that it is impossible to enter the future while in the present."

"But, but," I expostulated, "it did not actually occur thirteen hours later. It's merely the difference in time between Peru and India; it was 7 P. M. there when 6 A. M. here. That's not—"

"PARDON my interruption," he exclaimed. "You say that it is merely the difference in time. Then you admit that time *is* merely a relative term. And you were about to state, if I am not mistaken, that the fact that the accident was reported thirteen hours before it occurred did not actually constitute entering the future. Ah, my friend, how inconsistent you are. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that you or I possessed means of traveling to

or from India instantaneously, or even at undreamed of speed—at a speed which, let us say, enabled us to visit India and return in an hour or two. In that case, *amigo mio,* had you been in India when the unfortunate accident occurred, you could have flown here and could have declared—with absolute certainty—that a railway accident would occur and that sixteen persons would lose their lives at 7 P. M. even though you reached Lima at 6 A. M. And, supposing again, that no wireless communication existed, and that, in due course of time, mail from India confirmed your statement, would not the public have declared you a prophet who could foretell the future?"

I was actually stumped. But presently I gathered my wits together. This was, I knew, utter nonsense. It was all the result of the variation in time due to the earth's rotation on its axis, and I felt that my friend was merely arguing for the sake of trying to convince me the impossible was possible by scientific theory. Doctor Mentiroso listened patiently, and with a half-pitying, half-indulgent smile, as I expressed these sentiments.

"You are, in a way, dealing with the pith of the whole matter," he announced when I ceased speaking. "That is, you refer to the variation of time, to the rotation of the earth, and by so doing you tacitly admit that time is actually non-existent, that, scientifically speaking, there is no past, no present and no future; for, if time, as you understand it, exists; if the past vanishes and the future is never present, then time would be the same everywhere. Your so-called time, therefore, is merely a relative term used to describe the motion of the earth in its relation with the sun. In other words, human beings have discovered that our sphere rotates upon its axis and follows its orbit about the sun, and for convenience, mankind has seen fit to divide the rotation and the orbit into periods which we are pleased to call hours, days, months and years. But time literally is a far different matter. It is in fact infinite, it goes on into infinity and springs from infinity. Nothing in nature, *amigo mio,* is ever wasted or destroyed, although it may alter in form or substance. The light we see here, the image which such light throws upon our brains by the medium of our eyes, does not end here, any more than it began here. It is merely a vibratory wave which has travelled millions of miles and will continue to travel millions, trillions of miles—into infinity in fact—and as it requires an appreciable period for even light to travel, every visible event of the past must be somewhere in that infinity just as every event of the future must be recorded somewhere and is travelling toward us to be revealed when it reaches us. In the same way, time is but a vibratory wave, a movement of electrons, and could one but follow the path of time at a greater speed than the vibratory wave travels, then most assuredly, could one witness events which transpired a hundred or a hundred thousand years ago. Or, going in the other direction, he could see events which would not transpire on earth for thousands of years to come. I—"

"Hold on," I cried. "You are merely theorizing, carrying scientific hypotheses to the ultimate degree. And besides, even if I admit your preposterous statements to be theoretically sound, you are carrying the whole matter beyond the range of possibilities of human beings and into space; they do not apply to happenings on earth and hence, as I said before, it is impossible for us to enter either the past or the future."

I thought I had stumped my friend, but I was mistaken.

"VERY well," he agreed. "It is hard, I admit, for the average man to visualize or comprehend anything beyond the confines of our own planet. So, my friend, we will confine ourselves to this petty earth of ours. And to prove to you that my statements and 'theories' are sound, let me call your attention to a few facts which, with a little reflection, you must recognize as irrefutable. The earth, you know, revolves from west to east at an approximate speed of 1,000 miles per hour, and hence each so-called hour of time represents approximately one thousand miles of the earth's greatest circumference. Bear in mind, please, that in speaking of these matters, I am referring always to approximate figures—though if you wish, I can give you the exact figures. But to resume. Granted then that it is, according to the accepted ideas of time, noon, Monday, in Lima; it will be approximately six P. M. in London or Barcelona; 12 P. M. in Calcutta and 6 A. M. in Hawaii. "Yes," I assented. "Roughly speaking, that is so."

"Very well," continued Doctor Mentiroso. "Suppose, for the sake of argument, that you are provided with a machine which can travel through the air at a speed of 1,000 miles per hour, and supposing that in this machine you start eastward from Lima at noon today. It is also assumed that you will set your watch in accord with Lima time and will not alter it until you again arrive at Lima. At what time would you reach Barcelona?"

I did a bit of mental calculation and replied confidently: "At 6 P. M." *Don* Fenomeno laughed heartily. "Oh, my dear friend," he exclaimed. "Wrong at the very start. You forget that at the moment you left Lima it was noon and hence 6 P. M. in Spain. And as you have supposedly consumed six hours in reaching your destination, it will be 12 P. M. when you arrive there, although your watch will tell you that it is but 6 P. M. So you have already traveled six hours into the future. Very well. Suppose you leave at once for Calcutta; at what hour will you arrive at that Indian city?"

This time I was a bit more careful, and after a moment's hesitation replied: "At noon on Tuesday."

"Exactly—according to Calcutta's clocks," assented my friend. "But suppose you glance at your watch. You will find that it is only 12 P. M. on Monday, so that you have now entered twelve hours into the future. But continue eastward and head for Hawaii. Reaching that delightful spot, what time do you find it is?"

Rapidly figuring with a pencil on a scrap of paper, I gave my answer: "Approximately 12 P. M. Monday."

"And according to your watch, 6 A. M. Tuesday," chuckled the doctor. "In other words, you find Hawaii's time precisely the same as was Calcutta's six hours before, while you have traveled back from the future six hours towards the present; and, continuing your mad flight to Lima, you will discover that you complete your journey around the earth at noon on Tuesday—twenty-four hours after leaving; and remarkable as it may seem, your watch and the

clocks in Lima agree on the hour. By some mysterious means, you have come back to the present after entering the future to the extent of twelve hours."

"But," I objected, "you forget that in crossing the approximate 180th degree of longitude in the Pacific, a day is added or subtracted according to whether one is traveling east or west."

"Quite true," agreed the doctor. "But supposing you had done so, then when you arrived in Lima, it would have been a day later, whereas it would of necessity—considering that you circumnavigated the earth in twenty-four hours—be the same day. And to further prove the fallacy of your argument; suppose you start from Lima in a westerly direction, stopping at the same points as before. In that case, *amigo mio*, be good enough to tell me at what hour and on what day you would arrive at Hawaii?"

"That is easy," I declared. "I would arrive at Honolulu at approximately 6 P. M. on Monday."

"By your own watch, yes," chuckled my friend. "But at noon on Monday according to the time in the Hawaiian Islands. In other words, you might truthfully be said to have traveled from Lima to Honolulu instantaneously. But if you continue on your westward flight, at what hour, by Calcutta time, would you arrvie at that town?"

"I suppose there's a catch in it," I replied, "and I confess I'm getting so confoundedly confused that I might as well guess at it. I should say at 6 A. M. Tuesday."

Doctor Mentiroso laughed good naturedly. "No, my friend," he announced. "It would be at noon on Tuesday, for during the twelve hours which have passed since you left Lima, twelve hours have also passed in Calcutta, although your own timepiece would indicate that it was 12 P. M. on Monday, so you would again be 12 hours in the future. But continuing on your way you would find, on arriving at Barcelona, that it was still noon on Monday, although 6 A. M. Tuesday by your watch, so that you had leaped from twelve hours into the future and were now back six hours towards the present. Continuing onwards, you would reach Lima at 12 noon on Tuesday, your watch would indicate noon on Tuesday, and you would suddenly discover that you had been in three places, separated one from the other by nearly six thousand miles, at precisely the same hour."

I THREW up my hands in despair. "I know you are juggling figures," I declared. "But I'll be hanged if I see where it comes in. I suppose you still have something up your sleeve. Well, fire away, I'll be the goat."

Don Fenomeno nodded and smiled. "Then let us assume that your purely imaginary aircraft is capable of traveling at the rate of 24,000 miles per hour or that, in an hour's time, you can circumnavigate the earth. In that case, starting from Lima at noon on Monday, and rushing eastward, you would arrive in Barcelona at 6.30 P. M. on Monday, though your watch would show it to be 12.15 P. M. You would reach Calcutta at 1 A. M. Tuesday, although still only 12.30 on Monday by your watch. At Hawaii you would find time had leaped back to 7.30 A. M. Monday, despite the fact that your watch showed 12.45 of the same day, and at 1 P. M. on Monday by your watch you would be back in Lima where the clocks would prove to you that it was 2 P. M. despite the fact that you had been absent only one hour."

"And what marvellous thing would occur should I reverse my flight and travel westward?" I asked.

"In that case," he replied, "you would be at Honolulu at 12.15 Monday by your watch, but at 6.15 A. M. by the local clocks. At Calcutta you would find the inhabitants soundly sleeping at 12.30 A. M. Tuesday, although by your own time it would be barely half an hour after noon on Monday. At Barcelona the working people would be going home

A. HYATT VERRILL

One of our most versatile contributors, without question, is Mr. A. Hyatt Verrill. He is not only an author of note, but is an illustrator, naturalist, and explorer as well. The following is taken from *Who's Who* in America: "Educated at Hopkins Grammar School, New Haven; Yale School of Fine Arts; special course on zoology under his father. Illustrated natural history department of Webster's International Dictionary, 1896; Clarendon Dictionary; many scientific reports and other publications. Mr. Verrill is also the inventor of the autochrome process of photography in natural colors, in 1902. Extensive explorations in Bermuda, West Indies, Guiana, Central America, and Panama, 1889 to 1920. Rediscovered supposedly extinct Solenodon parodoxus in Santo Domingo, 1907. Now connected with Museum of American Indian. Author of 48 books, among which the following are the best known: Harper's Aircraft Book, Harper's Wireless Book, Getting Together with Latin America, Home Radio, Radio Detective Series, Deep Sea Hunters in South Seas. Contributor of numerous articles and stories to magazines, etc."

from their labors at 6.45 P. M. on Monday, despite your watch telling you that it was 12.45, and you would get back to Lima at 1 P. M. on Monday to find that your watch agreed with Lima's time. And now, if you are not being bored, let me give you a still more striking illustration of the purely imaginary and relative status of what we ordinarily call time. If, when in your 24,000 mile per hour craft, you set your watch in accord with the local time at each point of call it would work out thus when going east: Leaving Lima at noon on Monday you reach Barcelona at 6.30 P. M. Monday, and setting your watch to agree, you proceed to Calcutta where you arrive at 1 A. M. on Tuesday to find your watch indicates 6.45 P. M. Monday. Again altering your watch and heading for Hawaii, you arrive there at 7.30 A. M. Monday, regardless of the fact that your watch says 1.15 A. M. Tuesday and, having readjusted the latter, you proceed and reach Lima at 1 P. M. Monday and find your watch is at 7.45 A. M. Monday. Thus you will have been in the future over six hours at Barcelona, and over eleven hours in Calcutta, but you will have been into the past eighteen hours in Hawaii and back in Lima *five and one-half hours before you left this city.*"

"That," I ejaculated, "is ridiculously impossible."

"But nevertheless true," declared *Don* Fenomeno. "Moreover, should you follow out the same system and travel west you would return to Lima to find that, according to your watch, you had consumed six hours on your journey although you knew you had been away only one hour." "It's all bosh," I declared. "It's like proving black is white or that a cat has three tails, by mathematical formulae. Anyhow, it's impossible, for it is impossible to travel one thousand miles per hour, much less twenty-four thousand."

My Peruvian friend raised his dark eyebrows and shrugged. "Be very sure, my good friend, how you use the word impossible," he advised me. "Do not forget that, twenty years ago, anyone would have declared it impossible for man to fly in air at over one hundred miles per hour, and that, scarcely longer ago, it would have been deemed equally impossible to construct a motor car which would reach a speed of fifty miles an hour, not to mention one hundred miles and more. But before challenging your statement, let me, for the sake of clarity, give you a brief summary of the examples I have been drawing for your edification. Your watch, as you have seen, if kept at Lima time, would be constantly in the present (speaking approximately and regarding for our purpose the space of one hour as present) and yet you would have been at spots where yesterday's events were occurring and at others where tomorrow's happenings were taking place. And, this, my friend, is important: Provided the speed of the machine in which you travel could be accelerated so as to travel faster than light, you could go backward or forward into the past or present or into the fourth dimension. Moreover, as the human eye is incapable of registering the alternating effects of darkness and light at a speed greater than about 20 per second (as exemplified in the cinema), if you were passing rapidly enough about the earth, you could see no difference between light and darkness, could not realize time, and would appear to remain stationary and with time non-existent; and at the same time, you would be quite invisible to the eyes of any human beings. But even if your speed were not greater than the moderate speed of 24,000 miles per hour, you would of necessity go farther and farther into the past and future at every lap about the earth until—"

"MODERATE speed," I interrupted. "I like your idea of speed. Why, at that speed any machine would become incandescent through friction, and would be transformed to gas and ashes. Now don't try to kid me into—"

"Don't think for a moment I am endeavoring to 'kid' you as you call it," said Doctor Mentiroso, in injured tones. "Nothing is farther from my thoughts. I started out to convince you that the elimination of time was not impossible, and that a fourth dimension exists and has been discovered by me, Doctor Fenomeno Mentiroso, your most humble servant and very good friend. I admit that, under ordinary conditions, a machine traveling at such high speeds as I mentioned, would become heated to the incandescent point, but such a result would be due entirely to the friction of the air. Suppose then that the machine should travel beyond the atmospheric envelope of the earth, or that means could be found for eliminating air friction. In that case, you must admit there would be no fear of heating."

"You can suppose anything," I replied. "But suppositions are not actualities, and no one will ever be able to travel through space or overcome air friction. That, at least, you must admit is impossible. "On the contrary," declared *Don* Fenomeno, "I insist that it is not only possible but that it actually has been accomplished."

I gazed at my friend in incredulous amazement. Had Doctor Mentiroso taken leave of his senses? Or was he merely trying to lead me on for the sake of argument? Unquestionably, I decided, it must be the latter, for my friend was obviously as sane as ever, and was smiling at me in such a supercilious, or rather I might say, triumphant manner, that I was quite sure he had something up his sleeve.

"Perhaps," I suggested with a laugh, "you mean it has been accomplished theoretically. And by the way, did I not understand you to say that you had discovered the fourth dimension? Let's hear about that."

"You understood correctly, *amigo mio*," replied *Don* Fenomeno. "I *have* discovered the fourth dimension, and instead of accomplishing the feat of overcoming friction on a rapidly moving body on paper, I have accomplished it in fact. Moreover, the two discoveries are closely correlated, or, shall I say, dependent one upon the other. Had I not discovered the secret of the fourth dimension, I could not have accomplished the even greater feat. And, paradoxical as it may seem, had I not accomplished the latter, I would not have discovered the secret of the fourth dimension."

"I suppose," I remarked sarcastically, "that you will now inform me in all seriousness that you actually have constructed an apparatus capable of traveling one thousand miles an hour or more."

"Decidedly more," was his calm response. "To be exact, very nearly ten thousand miles an hour, and—"

"You're absolutely mad, my friend!" I exclaimed. "But go on, one must humor the insane. Next, I presume you will assure me that you have flown in your dream machine, perhaps have even circum-

navigated the world, and have thus proved the possibility of entering the future."

"I shall begin to believe in mental telepathy, if you continue," he laughed. "Your presumptions are extraordinarily correct. I *have* flown—or rather traveled, in my 'dream' machine as you see fit to call it, and I *have* circumnavigated the world at a speed nearly eleven times the speed of the earth's rotation, I—"

"Wait a bit!" I cried, now convinced that my friend had taken leave of his senses, but anxious to see how far he had gone, "You spoke of your apparatus traveling ten thousand miles an hour and now you tell me you have traveled around the earth eleven times faster than the globe rotates on its axis. I don't get that."

"I forgot to mention," he explained, "that the discovery of the principle of the fourth dimension also included the elimination of gravitational attraction, as it is commonly called, and as I have already told you that my discoveries do away with atmospheric friction you will at once understand that a machine traveling at an initial velocity of ten thousand miles an hour, and free from atmospheric friction and gravitational pull, will, when headed eastward, travel at that speed plus the speed of the earth's rotation, or approximately 11,000 miles per hour. I think—"

"Very good," I agreed, still determined to humor him, "but if there is no attraction of gravitation, why did you not fly off into space?"

"The fourth dimension again," he answered. "It will, of course, be difficult for you to understand, but I'll try to explain it in terms which are familiar to you. And I see that you think I am crazy. I'm not surprised, my friend, but, as a matter of fact, I was never saner. I think, before I am through, that you will realize this. But to reply to your most natural query. If, for example, you jump into the air, you temporarily overcome gravitation through the use of muscular power which is greater than the force of gravity on your body, but you can only jump so far. In other words, your limit is one of the three recognized dimensions. If you jump longitudinally, the same thing occurs, for your leap is limited by length; and here let me call your attention to a very ordinary, but hitherto entirely overlooked matter, which is of the utmost importance. When you leap upward, you return to your original position or to the earth in an approximately straight line. But when you leap longitudinally, you travel from start to finish in a curved line. Although, so far as I am aware, this phenomenon has never attracted much attention, it is an indication of the existence of the fourth dimension. But I am digressing. Just as your recognized three dimensions measure your jump perpendicularly or horizontally, so the fourth dimension regulates or controls the distance my apparatus can move against gravitational pull; perhaps it might be better to say that the gravitational pull controls the fourth dimension."

"ANOTHER point," I insisted. "If you overcome air friction, how do you propel your machine? I may be a layman, but I fail to see how any apparatus can be propelled without friction. I have always understood that it was frictional resistence which propelled an airplane."

"Usually it is," he replied. "But in the present case, no. My apparatus embodies an entirely new principle. I am very sorry, but I scarcely like to divulge it at present, and," he added with a laugh, "you probably wouldn't be any the wiser for the explanation."

"I might if I could see it," I suggested.

"Possibly," he repeated with an odd smile. "But we will leave that until later. As I remarked, it is difficult for me to convey an adequate idea of my apparatus, but I will do my best. Relieved of what is known as the attraction of gravitation, the machine, of course, rises or is thrown violently upward from the earth, its upward flight controlled by the use of the fourth dimension, which, for reasons I will explain, I have called 'Esnesnon.' Being free from air friction, as I have already said, it remains stationary while the earth and its envelope of atmosphere whirls from east to west at 1,000 miles per hour, the result being the same as if the apparatus were traveling eastward at 1,000 miles per hour."

"But you stated that your machine traveled at a speed of 10,000 miles per hour," I objected.

"So it does," he declared, as calmly as though speaking of fifty or one hundred miles an hour. "And that speed, added to the speed of the earth's rotation, equals the 11,000 miles I referred to. But, my good friend, I have already told you that; how many times must I repeat such simple matters?"

"They may appear simple to you," I said, "and you may be sane as you say, but to me the mere thought of such speed is too staggering to believe. And I still fail to see how you propel your machine when, as you claim, you eliminate air friction or pressure or whatever you may call it."

"I was coming to that very point when you interrupted me," he replied a bit impatiently. "As I said, the earth's atmospheric envelope is sweeping past the apparatus at a speed of 1,000 miles per hour. In other words, the apparatus stands isolated in the centre of a one thousand miles per hour hurricane. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly clear," I assured him.

"Very well," he continued. "Now let me ask you a question. Did you ever hear of the so-called rotorship, a vessel invented and constructed a few years ago by a German?"

"Certainly," I replied. "The vessel, as I recall it, was provided with large cylindrical masts or towers which were revolved at high speed, the idea being that wind impinging on a rotating surface produces a vacuum and forces the rotating surface forward. But the rotor ship, I believe, proved a complete failure. Anyhow, what has that to do with your discoveries?"

"Nothing, directly," he said, "I was merely seeking some familiar thing which I could use as a comparison to enable you to grasp the basic principles of my apparatus. And I might add that the rotor-ship was not a failure from a mechanical or scientific point of view, but was merely commercially impractical, owing to various factors which in no way affect its principle. But to continue. If, when within the mass of air moving at 1,000 miles an hour, a portion of that force of air were permitted to strike upon a revolving surface, my apparatus would rush forward exactly as the rotor-vessel was propelled, only immeasurably faster."

"I can understand that," I admitted. "But it certainly would not move forward at 10,000 miles an

hour when the speed of the air was only 1,000 miles an hour. Moreover, what means could you employ to prevent the air friction if you used that friction for your propelling force? It seems to me, my friend, that you are contradicting yourself."

Again, *Don* Fenomeno smiled that superior and condescending smile. "Suppose the entire frictional force were exhausted in propelling the machine," he observed. "And by rotating the rotors, as we may call them, rapidly enough to absorb all the friction, and by allowing the friction of the air to act upon certain properly designed surfaces elsewhere, the apparatus would and actually did travel at the speed I have mentioned, although I admit I employ the gravitational pull as an auxiliary force. Just as an airplane rises and moves forward because of the angle of incidence upon its planes, so, by utilizing the gravitational force which would tend to draw my machine to earth, and then by special apparatus preventing it from descending, I would achieve a similar result and force the machine forward."

"But tell me," I broke in, now thoroughly interested and quite oblivious of the seeming impossibilities he was describing. "Tell me what power you use to accomplish these marvels. And what *is* this fourth dimension or 'Esnesnon' as you call it?"

"I'll answer your last question first," he replied. "Although, as a matter of fact, I cannot exactly explain what 'Esnesnon' is myself."

I laughed. "You say you've discovered something you cannot describe," I exclaimed. "Come now, *Don* Fenomeno, aren't you trying to see how far you can spoof me, as the British say?"

DOCTOR MENTIROSO flushed. "If it were not for the fact that you are a very old and dear friend of mine, and inexpressibly stupid, I should take offense at that remark and should refuse to say another word," he declared. "But under the circumstances, *amigo mio,* and knowing that you are really most *simpatico,* and that it is most difficult to convince one of anything quite new and revolutionary, I shall with patience control myself and will do my little best to convince you that I am serious and at the same time make clear to your uncomprehending mind exactly what I have done and how it has been accomplished. You say I contradict myself. My friend, you no doubt admit the existence of oxygen, of hydrogen, of nitrogen, of electricity, of radio waves and of numerous other things which the world accepts and uses in every walk of life. You admit, unquestionably, that the entire life of our planet, if not other planets as well, the existence of the universe in fact, depends upon the gases I have mentioned. But can you or any other man describe them? Can you give a clear definition of what oxygen, for example, is like? Have you or has anyone else ever seen it? And yet it has been discovered; it is in daily, hourly use; it is combined, isolated, confined, and, in combination with other materials, it assumes tangible forms. The same is true of electricity, of radio waves, of countless other things I might mention. 'Esnesnon' is much the same. It is invisible, intangible, indescribable, and yet without it the universe could not exist, and like many other things, it can be isolated, utilized and combined with other things."

"Hmm. There may be something in that," I admitted. "You say the 'Esnesnon' is not a force but a dimension. What then is the power or force you employ to achieve your amazing results?"

"The greatest force or power in the entire universe," declared *Don* Fenomeno. "The force which, for want of a better term, is known as the attraction of gravitation; the force which holds the planets to their orbits, the earth to its rotation, the spheres in place, and prevents you and me and the world about us from being transformed into attenuated gaseous matter."

I shook my head in despair. "You're getting beyond me again," I expostulated. "I've always understood that the attraction of gravitation is downward or towards the centre of the earth. In that case, I can't see how you can utilize the power except for coming down."

"Of course the pull is downward, or rather towards the centre of the earth—or towards the actual mass of any object," he exclaimed. "Every body has its gravitational force, which is exerted upon other bodies. But please understand, my friend, that the so-called attraction of gravitation is an electronic force and not a magnetic force. As far as your other question is concerned, may I call your attention to the fact that the force of water is also downward, you never saw a waterfall flow upward; and yet, as you know, water power may be utilized for innumerable purposes and to produce force for driving mechanisms in every direction. The same is true of the force of gravitation. Once its mysteries are mastered, it may be used as freely as water, steam, electricity or any other force, and being the supreme force of all forces, and the source of all, its power properly directed, is millions of times greater than any other known power."

"But how on earth did you happen to discover all this?" I demanded, at last convinced that Doctor Mentiroso had actually accomplished seemingly impossible feats beyond my wildest dreams.

"In a way," he replied, "I cannot claim to have discovered these things. I have rediscovered them. They have been known for centuries—perhaps thousands of years. No, do not look so skeptical, *amigo.* I am speaking the unvarnished truth and will explain. As you know, far more Inca than Spanish blood flows in my veins, and for long I have devoted much time to studying the history and remains of my ancestors. The stupendous works of the pre-Incas in particular have always been a source of marvel and wonder to me, as to yourself and to countless thousands of other men. Feats which they performed seem almost supernatural, as you know. The massive walls about Cuzco and Lake Titicaca, walls composed of stupendous blocks weighing scores of tons; blocks of twenty to thirty or more faces, and each so perfectly cut and so accurately fitted that even today a pen-point cannot be inserted between the stones; the cyclopean monuments and buildings; the tunnels cut through many feet of living rock; the enormous fortresses; the marvellous metal work, all these facts performed by the long-dead race have puzzled every archeologist and no one has hitherto been able to explain by what unknown means they were accomplished. But to me, and now that I am about to divulge it, to you, the secret is known at last. All these great feats, my friend, were simple matters to my ancestors, for they, of all men, had discovered the fourth dimension and the key to utilizing the forces of gravitation. Two years ago,

in the unknown and unexplored territory east of Lake Titicaca, I learned of a ruined city from the Indians. There I went and found, hidden in the forest, the ruins of a pre-Incan city of vast extent. In all Peru no other such ruin had ever been found, no other had remained so well preserved, for the Spanish conquerors had never reached it, and it had remained unmolested and free from looting and vandalism for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years.

"HERE I set up my camp and for days studied the countless carvings and inscriptions that covered walls, columns and monuments; here, for the first time, I found hieroglyphs that seemed to me possible of interpretation. But I could make little of them, familiar as I was with the language of the Incas. At last luck or fortune, or perhaps the spirits of my ancestors, favored me. An earthquake rent the ground and threw down a massive piece of wall to disclose a hidden chamber wherein were stored priceless records of the race who once had dwelt there and who, as I soon learned, were the highest caste of the mysterious pre-Incan people.

"Here, too, and most wonderful of all, was the key to the glypths, besides countless strange instruments and utensils; wonderful works in copper, bronze and gold; plans of the monuments, the fortresses and the walls which exist throughout Peru today, and here, as franctically, fascinated I studied the glyphs and records, I learned that my ancestors, fully twenty centuries before the coming of Pizarro, had mastered the secrets of the fourth dimension and of gravitational force and had harnessed them and by their aid had accomplished the seeming miracles of cyclopean work which we wonder at today. It would be of little interest and would be a long story to tell you all the details of my discovery, *amigo mio*. But to me, a descendant of that strange highly civilized but forgotten race, was given the fortune to learn the secrets and laws of nature which, centuries ago, had been discovered, and centuries later had been lost through wanton destruction of a nation. And herein, my friend, my ancestors failed. All they had learned they had applied to peaceful arts; never did it occur to them that the tremendous, the irresistible forces they alone knew, could be used against their enemies, that no beings could resist them. But I, I, *Don* Fenomeno Mentiroso, *señor*, I am not so blind. With the powers and forces I have rediscovered from the records of my ancestors, I have within my grasp that which will place my country forever beyond fear of conquest or of war. The united powers of the world might attempt to subdue or to humble Peru, but they would be as powerless as so many buzzing flies. Their navies could be destroyed, their armies wiped out, their artillery rendered useless, their aircraft annihilated as fast as they could be assembled; this could be done by means with which they could not cope. It is for that reason that I will never divulge my secrets. But do not think that I fail to realize the importance of my discovery to the arts of peace. But, greater to me is the importance of my accomplishments as a safeguard to my country. I . . ."

"Yes, yes," I interrupted, seeing that my temperamental and patriotic friend was rapidly working himself into a fervor, and, Latin-like, would continue his oratorical talk indefinitely. "Yes, *Don* Fenomeno, my good friend, I can clearly see your point. It is indescribably noble of you and worthy of a son of the Incas. But let us leave this side of the matter for the present and confine ourselves to a further consideration of the scientific and practical side of your most marvellous discoveries."

"Most certainly," he exclaimed. "Pardon me for so far digressing from the theme. Let me see, I was telling you of the power I employ and you asked how I happened to discover it. Now——"

"You have explained that," I reminded him. "And while I do not fully grasp all the technicalities of your twin discoveries or of your apparatus, I think I understand the principles, although I admit the whole affair is so absolutely astounding as to seem incredible. And I freely admit that were anyone but yourself to make such statements I should unhesitatingly put him down as worthy rival of Baron Münchhausen."

My friend rose and bowed. "Thank you, a thousand thanks to you, *amigo*, for the implied compliment," he laughed.

"But there is another question," I continued. "Did I understand you to say that you actually *had* traveled around the earth on your, or in your secret apparatus?"

"You did, and I have," he assured me, "not once but several times, and each time my observations and records proved conclusively that my deductions and calculations were sound and correct, and that with the proper means at my command, I can go into the future or the past and can eliminate 'time' as you call it. Strictly speaking, of course, time is but a relative term, a mere arbitrary word, whereas actual time is a wave governed and controlled by the 'Esnesnon,' and is no more like your arbitrary conception of time and bears no more relation to it than oxygen does to water or nitrogen bears to nitrate of potassium. In other words, my friend, your so-called time is governed by the 'Esnesnon' while the true time, and by that I mean the phase of the vibratory time wave, is not in any way affected by your conception of time. Is that clear?"

"About as clear as mud," I grinned. "But if you have traveled about the earth at 11,000 miles an hour, how in the world could you see or observe anything while moving at that rate of speed?"

"OH, my poor friend!" he exclaimed pityingly. "Can you not grasp the fundamental truth that all things are relative? To you, a speed is great or small merely by comparison with your much slower motions and surroundings. Were you dropped from a thousand foot precipice, you would see nothing but a blurr as you hurtled earthward, but the condor or the eagle, dropping for thousands of feet, and at terrific speed, sees the smallest bird or animal and strikes it unerringly. And so, in an apparatus wherein your cloying, arbitrary time is non-existent, and surrounded and controlled by the fourth dimension, a speed which to you would seem incomprehensibly swift, seems merely a slow and steady jog to me. Indeed, though perhaps you will not believe it, my circumnavigation of the earth appears to me, at the time, to be no shorter than when, several years ago, I went around the world in one of the Dollar Line steamships. Not until I return and step from the fourth dimensional machine into

the humdrum present, do I realize that the journey has consumed only an hour or two. Now if only you, too——"

"Nothing doing," I announced positively, before he could complete his sentence. "I'll leave it to you. But tell me, when did you make your last trip?"

Don Fenomeno glanced at his watch. "By your time, I returned to Lima at 8 p.m. yesterday," he replied, as casually as though referring to a motor ride of a few miles.

"And at what hour did you start on this wondrous trip?" I asked.

He laughed. "At midnight, last night," was his amazing reply.

"What?" I gasped. "What nonsense is this? You say——"

He raised his hand and checked me. "Have you forgotten so soon all the examples I gave you?" he asked. "Do you not remember that I pointed out that, if you should travel eastward at a speed greater than the rotation of the earth, you would be back in Lima before you started? For example, I am planning another trip today and as I travel at a rate of approximately 11,000 miles per hour, and start at eleven thirty—precisely one hour from now—I will of necessity be back this morning at 7.30, the slight difference in figures between my example and the actuality being due to the fact that my route does not precisely follow the equatorial circumference of the earth."

I sank back in my chair and ran my hands through my hair. "It's all the dreamiest, weirdest hodge-podge, the most involved and incomprehensible thing I ever heard," I cried. "Why, man alive, if I'm hearing aright, and you're serious, then in an hour you'll start off and this morning at seven-thirty you'll be back, and I'll be here at nine and you'll tell me all this damned nonsense over again, and start again, and . . . why confound it all, if that's true, to-day'll go on forever or . . . good Heavens, it makes my head reel to think about it."

Doctor Mentiroso laughed heartily. "My dear good friend," he exclaimed. "Do not be so perturbed about it. You forget that you are talking and thinking of arbitrary time, whereas I am referring to fourth dimensional, or real time. No, my friend, though by your time I may set forth at half after eleven today and return this morning at seven thirty, yet by actual time I set out and returned at precisely the same moment of your time. No—be patient a moment, for there are many puzzling features of the matter, some of which I confess I have not fully mastered myself as yet. But it is obvious, *amigo mio,* that did I actually arrive at seven thirty this morning from a trip on which I am to start out four hours after I arrive, then I certainly could not be present in the interim. But I propose, my friend, that you witness a most interesting experiment which, if I am not mistaken, will convince you of the soundness of my statements. You can be of great help to me then."

"I'll gladly do anything within reason to help you," I assured him, still a bit dazed at the nightmarish problems his words had started in my mind. "But I'll do nothing rash, and I will *not* try any stunts in that mad machine of yours. For that matter, I'm beginning to think its all bosh and you have no such machine."

"I'll soon convince you of that," he declared. "But what I am about to ask of you is neither rash nor risky. I would merely like to have you witness my departure and return and check up on the phenomena. If, as you and others claim, your so-called time really exists, then beyond question, I cannot encircle the globe—no matter how fast I travel, and yet be back hours before I set forth or even instantaneously. On the other hand, if I am right and your time is a ridiculous, nonsensical and childish thing, with no basis, and true time is entirely distinct, then I will of a certainty be back before I start or at least at the same moment. Are you willing, *amigo mio,* to try the test?"

"Gladly," I declared. "Come, show me your 11,000-mile-an-hour machine and hop off for a trip around the earth, and I'll wait and time you. You can't keep up this joke much longer, old man."

Once again, *Don* Fenomeno smiled in his oddly superior way and rose from his chair. "Very well, my good friend," he remarked. "I think within a few moments you are due to have a rather astounding surprise."

He led the way through a heavily barred and padlocked door to a large windowless room, or rather, I might say, an open court enclosed by high massive walls. In the centre, and resting on a sort of pedestal of black stone, was an elliptical or egg-shaped contrivance of a peculiar bluish color, reminding me of blued steel, and about thirty feet in length by eight or ten feet in diameter. I regret that I cannot give a detailed description of the thing, for one of the conditions on which Doctor Mentiroso insisted before granting me permission to make public his discoveries, was that I should omit all detailed descriptions of his apparatus or its mechanism. I may state, however, that the exterior of the machine was covered with spiral flanges or bands, so that it had somewhat the appearance of a gigantic screw; that several pyramidal or mushroom-shaped projections broke its surface, and that it had no wings or planes like an airship.

"This," announced my friend, "is the machine which I referred to."

"It appears to be a machine all right," I admitted, "but it certainly does not appear capable of rising or of progressing, and even more certainly not at any such speed as you claim for it."

Don Fenomeno laughed. "Appearances," he reminded me, "are often very deceptive. But as you say in English, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating.' In a few moments, my friend, you will change your mind. And let me forewarn you; you may witness some rather disconcerting events but you need not be either surprised or alarmed at anything which may transpire. It now lacks but three minutes of the time for my departure. Will you, *amigo mio,* stand here and time me in my flight around the earth?"

"Gladly," I replied, "provided your flight does not consume too much time. For I have not eaten lunch as yet, and if you are not back within an hour or two—and I haven't the least expectation that you will be—I warn you that my appetite will overcome my curiosity and I shall go out to eat."

"You will not have to go hungry long," he de-

clared. "Even if you are right, it will be a short time before I return."

"That is, if you go or return at all," I said. "But let us get this clear. You claim you'll return before you start or at the same time, which I claim is manifestly impossible; I claim that, granting there's no fake to all this and that by some incredible means you *can* fly around the earth in that contraption at the speed you state, you'll be back here in approximately two hours. Am I right?"

"Absolutely," he agreed while he approached the mechanism and stopped to examine some knobs and dials on the black rock pedestal. "Would you mind," he asked, "standing about here. You'll be better able to witness some of the phenomena which may take place." He indicated a step leading to the pedestal. It was, as he said, a fine point of vantage, and anxious to make sure that there was no trickery about the matter, despite my faith in *Don* Fenomeno, I took my place as he suggested. Smiling, my friend then stepped to his machine, climbed upon it, and opening a sliding panel, stepped within. "Don't leave until I'm back," he cautioned me, as with only his head visible he prepared to close the door. "It's important for you to remain exactly where you are. You see," he added as if in explanation, "I cannot be a witness of the phenomena and I want you to tell me about everything that takes place. Now take out your watch and time me, for I'll be off in a jiffy."

AS he spoke, he ducked into his machine and drew the panel shut. Wondering what, if anything, would happen next, I glanced at my watch and found it precisely eleven thirty. As I did so there was a strange roar from the machine before me; a sudden wind seemed to sweep with terrific force across the courtyard; I swayed on my feet; my head swam dizzily; I had the impression of being hurled over and over, and then, as suddenly as it had begun, the noise ceased, the air was calm and still and my head cleared. I glanced at the pedestal and stared with unbelieving eyes. The egg-shaped apparatus had vanished! It was true then! My friend had actually taken flight in his strange machine. Undoubtedly that explained the rush of air and my sensations, for assuredly a mass of that size could not have hurtled upward at over ten thousand miles an hour without creating a terrific vortex in its wake. Hardly had these thoughts rushed through my brain when once more the blast of a hurricane roared about me; I clung for dear life to the stone pedestal; for a brief second I seemed to lose consciousness, and, as before, the wind ceased, my brain cleared, and as I raised myself from my recumbent position I almost cried out in amazement. Before me, and resting within six feet of where I stood, was the bluish, ovoid thing into which Doctor Mentiroso had vanished. It was incredible that he could have gone far in the few brief seconds which had elapsed. No doubt, I thought, he had had trouble, or had returned for some other reason, and I momentarily expected to see him emerge from the thing. So great had been my excitement and confusion that I had completely forgotten to look at my watch. A glance showed me, however, that less than one minute had elapsed!

The next second the slide in the machine opened, *Don* Fenomeno's head appeared, and as I stared at him, he sprang from the machine. As he did so, a sudden wave of darkness seemed to envelop me; I had the terrifying sensation of having gone blind; and with a sharp cry I put my hands to my eyes. Instantly, it was full sunlight once more, my friend's laugh sounded in my ears, and I looked up to find him standing beside me with a triumphant smile on his face.

"Well, what think you now, *amigo mio?*" he exclaimed.

"I think I'm mad," I replied. "Do you mean to tell me——"

"That I have again circumnavigated the old earth?" he chuckled. "I certainly do, my friend. But what time did I return?"

"At eleven thirty-one, if you actually *did* return," I replied.

"And will you kindly glance at *my* watch?" he asked.

"Great Scott!" I ejaculated. "Yours says 7.38!"

"Assuredly," was his calm response. "I returned from my little jaunt approximately six minutes ago, or at 7.32 a.m. In other words, four hours before I started, and we are now conversing easily although I am in the past four hours while you are in the present, or else I am in the present and you are four hours in the future."

I sank limply upon a settee. "If you keep this up I'll be hopelessly mad, if I'm not already," I gasped. "It's all too involved for me and I believe it's some devilish hallucination anyhow."

"Did you not see me start and return?" he asked.

"The Lord knows," I cried. "One instant your contraption was gone, the next instant it was back. I was nearly blown away by a cyclone. I seemed to be whirled topsy-turvey; I've been temporarily blind, and I *know* it's absolutely preposterous for you to claim that you flew around the earth in one minute."

"Less than that," he corrected me. "You were a trifle confused, I expect, and forgot to look at your watch the moment I arrived. I might add that, for a moment or two, you were partially in the fourth dimension. You inadvertently stepped away from the spot where I posted you. It's a bit lucky you didn't go farther or I might have had trouble in getting you back."

I was too stunned and nonplussed to speak. It was all too thoroughly ridiculous and impossible. Somehow, I was sure that my friend had gone hurtling through space, and yet I could not credit it, and I could not account for my peculiar sensations or why his watch should have leaped back four hours. Still, his explanation could not, I felt, be true.

"LOOK here, *Don* Fenomeno," I exclaimed at last. "It's utterly preposterous for you to claim you have traveled twenty-four thousand miles in one minute or less, especially when you yourself claim only eleven thousand miles an hour for your machine. That would mean over two hours at the best."

"But, my dear sir," he replied. "You forget that you are talking arbitrary time. According to that time absolutely no appreciable period elapsed between my start and my return, whereas, if you wish to argue along the lines of true time, I might point out that I encircled the globe in four hours less than nothing of your time."

"But I don't admit that you have proved you encircled the globe." I persisted.

"Then you are still unconvinced," laughed *Don* Fenomeno. "It is, I think, fortunate that I possess the patience and determination of my Indian ancestors or I should despair of convincing you. But I have an idea. Certainly, if I actually passed through the places I have mentioned, then I should have knowledge of events transpiring there. Let me see. Ah, I have it. When in Barcelona, the most notable occurrence was the tragic death of a famous bullfighter, a matador known as Manuelito, who was killed by an infuriated bull in the arena. That was, let me see, at approximately 6 p.m. today. And as I passed through Calcutta a fire was raging on the docks and had spread to vessels moored there. That would have been at about 12.30 tonight."

I laughed. "Of course you can say that," I replied. "But how can you prove that such occurrences took place?"

"Easily enough," he responded. "We will hurry to the cable office and see what foreign news has arrived. And if my statements are verified, I am sure that even such a doubting Thomas as you, my friend, will be convinced. Most assuredly, you must admit that unless I had actually been at Barcelona and Calcutta I could not have known what was taking place there."

In a few moments we reached the office of the "All America Cables" to find a boy just attaching the latest cabled news to the bulletin board, and as I read the heading of the uppermost sheet, my head fairly reeled and I stood gaping in astonishment. There, unmistakably, was the announcement that as the final bull of the afternoon was about to be killed by the favorite matador, Manuelito, the man had slipped on a pool of blood and had instantly been charged and gored by the infuriated bull.

Doctor Mentiroso's self-satisfied chuckle brought me to my senses.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "So you do believe I was in Barcelona this evening. If I am not mistaken, my statement regarding Calcutta will also be verified in a moment. Here comes the boy with another sheet."

This time I was scarcely surprised as I read the outstanding news on the latest bulletin, for I had almost expected it, but as I read the account of the disastrous dock fire in Calcutta I had the strange sensation of being in a dream.

"I admit it, now," I muttered, as I turned away. "But I still feel that the thing is impossible and that it must all be a dream. But man! If you really can do these things, you will be the most famous and the richest man on earth. Why, there is no limit to what you may accomplish. Think what it will mean to commerce, to civilization, to linking the nations of the world together!"

Doctor Mentiroso shook his head and smiled sadly. "I realize all of this," he said with a sigh, "but it is not for me to profit by my discovery. As I said before, I shall keep the matter a secret, a secret known only to you and to myself, and to be used solely for my own scientific investigations. And if my beloved country should be threatened by a foe, it can be used as a means of national defense."

"But you are robbing mankind of the most astounding and revolutionary discoveries ever made," I protested. "Surely you could manage to keep the details, the processes of your inventions secret so that Peru's enemies could not construct similar machines."

"That would be impossible," he declared. "Did you ever know of any national secret being kept from an enemy? No, *amigo mio*, only by keeping what I know locked in my own brain can I hope to hold the key to the situation. But I cannot resist the fascinating lure of exploring the mysteries of space and the fourth dimension, and in that way I hope to discover facts which may be used for the benefit of my fellow men."

"WHAT," I asked him, "do you propose to do next? You have proved you can conquer time and space. I shall no more question your statement that you have discovered the fourth dimension, nor shall I doubt that you have harnessed the forces of gravitation. But what more can you do? I can scarcely see what new facts you can discover regarding the elimination of time."

"Ah, there you show the layman's lack of imagination and ignorance of the possibilities of science," he exclaimed. "As yet, my friend, I have but touched the fringe of the unknown. I am like an explorer about to enter a new and unknown land. I have entered the outer fringe of the territory but I have yet to plunge into the mysterious depths before me."

"I confess," I declared, "that I do not get the drift of what you are saying. It seems to me that, as far as exploring is concerned, you might go on flying around the world forever and ever and really find out nothing that you do not already know. Now if you should test your machine for . . ."

"Around the earth!" he ejaculated. "Surely you do not imagine that I intend to confine my observations to circumnavigating the globe! No, it is the realm of space I shall explore. If, by merely traveling around the earth, I can conquer time and travel into the future for an hour or two, just stop and think what it may reveal if I travel through the earth's orbit! Think what discoveries of science I might make by beating our terrestrial globe around the sun. Why, friend, I could gain months, years, where I now gain hours. I could learn the innermost secrets of time, of the past and of the future. I . . ."

I stopped in my tracks and stared at him. "Surely," I cried, "you are not serious in this. You surely do not intend to attempt to leave the earth's atmosphere on any such mad fool's errand."

"Why not?" he replied. "Is it any madder, any more impossible than you thought my statements of an hour or two ago? Yes, my friend, I not only intend to attempt such a journey, but I start today, this very afternoon, and you, alone of all men, are to witness the first departure of a human being for the uncharted, unknown realms of space."

"And if," I asked, "you should succeed in hurling your confounded machine through space without killing yourself, when do you expect to return to relate your experiences?"

Doctor Mentiroso was silent for a space, evidently thinking deeply. Then taking a note book and pencil from his pocket he made some rapid calculations.

"If I am correct in my deductions and my apparatus does not fail me, I should be back here in Lima in the early part of the year 1899," was his amazing statement.

"What!" I almost shouted. "You'll be back in 1899! And this is 1926!"

"Of course," he chuckled. "If I can encircle the globe and get back to my starting point four hours before I leave, why shouldn't I tear off through space, follow the earth's orbit around the sun and get back twenty or thirty years before I start? Or if I reverse my direction, why shouldn't I go an equal time into the future?"

"I'll be hanged if I know," I admitted. "But for my part I'd far rather remain in the present."

"But you *will* be present when I leave, won't you?" he begged. "I want some witness so that if I should return in the future or the past, there won't be any question as to when I started."

"I suppose I'll have to," I told him. "But I'm not approving it."

By this time we had returned to *Don* Fenomeno's house and he was leading me to the enclosed court with its strange time-defying machine. I was, I think, in a sort of daze, for otherwise I cannot account for my action in countenancing his mad scheme. But the astounding things I had heard and seen had had an almost hypnotic effect, and scarcely realizing what he was about to undertake, I saw him approach the apparatus, draw back the sliding panel and prepare to enter.

"You need not worry over my physical welfare," he remarked. "I've been preparing for this trip, and I am well provisioned, though I do not believe food is essential in the fourth dimension."

"I suppose," I remarked dryly, "that as you are going several years into the past, the food which you ate for the past twenty years or so will serve just as well."

"Something of that sort, perhaps," he grinned. "And now, please record the exact time when I leave. Good bye, *amigo mio*, I will not ask you to await my return, but I'll notify you at once when I'm back. I'll have some very interesting information to impart, I'm sure."

"I COULD scarcely be expected to wait *back* a score of years," I reminded him, "and I agree with you that if you *do* return, you will most certainly have an abundant mass of interesting information. Personally, though, I feel that both you and your discoveries are lost to science and the world from this moment."

"I'm sorry you won't accompany me," he declared, ignoring my caustic remarks. "Well, once more, good friend, *Adios*, or perhaps better, *hasta luego*, for this is *au revoir* and not good-bye."

I leaped forward and grasped his hand and bade him a warm farewell. Then, suddenly remembering that I might be within his damnable fourth dimension limit, I sprang back and away from the black stone pedestal. The next moment the panel had been closed and he had disappeared within the machine. Recollecting my former experience, I hurried away from the machine, but before I had taken ten steps, I was swept from my feet by the rush of air I had felt before. Glancing about as best I might, I saw that the machine with Doctor Mentiroso had vanished.

Despite the fact that I was not to await his return, I felt compelled to remain within the court, and torn by a thousand conflicting emotions, I maintained my lonely vigil throughout the night. Indeed, for weeks I visited the place daily, each time hoping against hope that the strange machine would once more gladden my eyes as it rested upon its pedestal. But *Don* Fenomeno has not returned.

But still, though my common sense tells me he has gone forever, I cannot rid myself of the conviction that some day my Peruvian friend will sweep down triumphantly from his journey through space. But perhaps, he really returned twenty-seven years ago. To this day, I do not know whether he was serious or was merely joking, when he spoke of returning in the year 1899.

THE END

What is the Answer?

NOW that you have read the Astounding Discoveries of Dr. Mentiroso, you will want to take a deep breath and come up for air. No doubt, if you are at all human, your head must be in a whirl, and you probably will not know what is fact and what is fiction. At any rate, what is the answer to Dr. Mentiroso's experiences?

Perhaps you can figure it out yourself, but it will take you quite a while before you hit upon the right solution. At any rate, you may wish to discuss it with your friends for a month. It will make excellent discussion. The answer will be published in the December issue of AMAZING STORIES.

What Do You Know?

READERS of AMAZING STORIES have frequently commented upon the fact that there is more actual knowledge to be gained through reading its pages than from many a textbook. Moreover, most of the stories are written in a popular vein, making it possible for any one to grasp important facts.

The questions which we give below are all answered on the pages as listed at the end of the questions. Please see if you can answer the questions first without looking for the answer, and see how well you check up on your general knowledge.

1. What is the difference between invisible heat and visible heat? (See page 748).
2. If one man traveled around the earth going east and another going west, and simply kept count of the days, making no change at the 180th meridian or thereabouts, could they have three Sundays in the same week when they met? (See page 749).
3. If you go to England in a fast ship, your days will be one hour too short; if you come back on the same ship, your days will be one hour too long. Why? (See page 751).
4. What great work was done by the early inhabitants of Peru? (See page 754).
5. Can you see and touch space? (See page 800).
6. How long in time units, such as seconds or minutes, is the present time? Can it be said to have an existence? (See page 803).
7. What is the characteristic of the stone age? (See page 727).
8. What weapons or instruments other than flints characterize the very early life of mankind? (See page 727).
9. How were the teeth of animals used by early man? (See page 744).

TREASURES of TANTALUS

~ By Garret Smith ~

She leaped to her feet and faced him with wide, startled eyes, shrinking back and clutching her bauble to her bosom. The father held out his right hand commandingly, speaking a volley of harsh words, demanding the thing she held in her hand.

BLAIR, a newspaper man, while seeking an interview with Thomas Priestley, who was on the point of losing his inheritance of several millions, because it seemed impossible to obtain within several hours, the signatures of three living relatives who were scattered in different corners of the earth, comes to the laboratory of Professor Rufus Fleckner, scientist and inventor, who, in the presence of twelve eminent men of science, is demonstrating his latest invention, the "Telephonoscope," *which penetrates all matter, eliminates space and catches the lowest sounds. It is also possible to project images and sound by means of the* "Telephonoscope" *rays.*

By projecting young Priestley's image before his three respective relatives, Fleckner obtains the signatures of all, releasing their claims on the fortune.

Before leaving the laboratory that day, a chance remark by Blair, made in newspaper fashion, to the effect that Fleckner had "undoubtedly established a corner on privacy," set Fleckner thinking about such possibilities and later results in near disaster and panic.

Unexpectedly, they (Priestley, as one of the stockholders of the new company formed to manufacture this marvelous machine, Blair as a newspaper man, sworn to secrecy for a while, and Ruth Stimson, confidential secretary) unearth a gigantic working crime trust, which boasted for its membership some of the best known and trusted business men, bankers, politicians, statesmen, etc. By throwing rays in different places at the same time they soon learn all the secret workings of this perfect-working organization engaged in criminal acts. They also learn that the acting head of the trust is none other than the president-elect, Mortimer Chandler, and that his three chief aides are: Judge Tanner, Assistant District Attorney Winter, and Dorgan, who form a Council of Three.

The hiding-place of the vast treasures that are periodically looted from banks and large corporations, etc., however, is still a mystery and Prof. Fleckner's main goal has now become the finding of the treasure trove. One day, while they are all intently watching the journey of the truck containing the last "haul" and feel certain that at last they will discover the hiding place of the treasure trove, for Chandler meets the truck and is about to proceed with it alone, Miss Stimson jerks a lever, and projects a cry of warning to Chandler. He abandons the truck in panic fear. They watch for a long time but can see no attempt to recover it.

After an interval of half an hour, Blair returns to the machine, to find that the van has disappeared.

Treasures *of* Tantalus

By Garret Smith

Part II

CHAPTER XII

The Crime Trust Retaliates

NUDGED Fleckner's shoulder sharply. He awoke with a start.

"Humph! Been asleep!" he ejaculated. He glanced at the clock

"Four o'clock! Dozed pretty nearly a half-hour! Three thirty when I looked last. How long you been out here? Anything happened?"

He looked at Chandler's restless image first, then at the section of mountain road. He, too, rubbed his eyes and looked again. Then he leaped to his feet excitedly.

"Where's the van?" he demanded. "You and Priestley been up to something?"

He whirled on me accusingly.

"Priestley is presumably still asleep," I replied coldly. "I just came out of my room. At any rate we could hardly have engineered the stealing in the few minutes you've been asleep, even if we could have done it without waking you."

But he seemed still suspicious of us. He tiptoed over to Priestley's room and looked in. I followed. I confess I wondered a little, preposterous as the idea seemed, if Priestley could have had a hand in it. But Priestley was sleeping the sound sleep of healthy exhaustion. Fleckner shook him roughly, and when he was awake told him what had happened. But he did not repeat the imputation he had hurled at me in the first excitement of his discovery. Priestley's astonishment seemed too genuine to be simulated.

Priestley came out, and under Fleckner's directions we each took a ray and made a systematic search of the hills all about the spot where the van had stood. The ground was frozen, and there was no snow, so we had no tracks to guide us.

At daybreak we gave it up and sat in discouraged discussion of many possible theories. My suspicions of the girl I kept to myself without knowing exactly why. Perhaps it was my consciousness of their vagueness. Possibly it was natural chivalry. It may have been the lingering appeal of a pair of violet eyes. I suspect it was all three. At any rate I contributed no suggestions of value, and neither of the other two thought of Miss Stimson in connection with the vanished van.

Fleckner was inclined to fancy some belated motorist had discovered the van and salvaged it. In that case, if the finder was honest, he would advertise his find. It would make a most sensational news story, the finding of two million dollars out on a lonely road without a guardian. It would become even more sensational when it developed that no one had missed this tidy

KNOW every one's business, know every one's secrets, know what goes on behind closed doors, know what the confidential files of business houses and those of the government contain, and you will have—panic, chaos, and worse. Human beings are not yet so constituted that they can allow prying into their private affairs. By means of Professor Fleckner's "Telephonoscope," *whereby it is possible to see through walls, television fashion, a unique situation was created, such as has never before been revealed in literature. If you were thrilled by the first installment, you will be fascinated by the closing chapters.*

little sum, and that there were no lawful claimants for it.

Of course if the owner were dishonest he would hide his treasure-trove, and in the course of time try to use it. In that case he would doubtless give himself away eventually.

Priestley, however, stubbornly clung to the belief that Chandler had somehow got word to a confederate while Fleckner slept. That man, he believed, had flown out in a swift plane and taken the van to a safe hiding-place where it would await another attempt by the chief.

"That we'll be able to determine as soon as Chandler gets back in touch with his men," the professor decided.

At eight o'clock Miss Stimson returned to her duties as usual. There was no hint in her manner of any remaining embarrassment over the occurrences of the night before. Her green shade was in place again, so I caught no more glimpses of her disturbing eyes. Fleckner greeted her rather curtly, and Priestley with a politely impersonal inquiry as to her health.

But we were immediately afterward engrossed with Chandler's movements. He went back to town on the 8.30 train, and at 9.30 was closeted alone in his office in his town house. Immediately he went into the telephone booth and turned one of the secret rings. Fleckner swung on the direction-finder, and a moment later switched one telephonoscope ray on the little private dining-room where the telephone bell was ringing merrily.

Chandler, meantime, having started the call to the Riccadona, came out of the booth and began pacing the floor.

A few minutes later a waiter at the café, passing down the corridor, heard the bell in the private room. He went in and pressed a button at the side of the instrument and the ringing ceased. At the same instant the phone in Chandler's office gave one sharp ring, evidently a signal that his call had been noted.

The waiter at the café hurried downstairs and to the desk.

"The other bell is ringing in No. 9," he said, and departed on his duties.

The cashier went into the phone booth back of him and called up Judge Tanner at his chambers.

"This is Tom," he said. "Your reservation for No. 9 is O. K."

Judge Tanner hung up the phone, put on his hat, and fifteen minutes later was in No. 9 at the Riccadona.

"An ingenious system for getting in touch with his gang at almost any time," Fleckner commented. "He didn't dare use it when he got in last night, I suppose, for fear a too unseasonable hour would arouse suspicion."

Tanner went through the form of ordering a breakfast, and then connected with Chandler's study by the wall phone. Chandler looked his intense relief when he found himself again in touch with his chief aid.

"The goods arrived at No. 20 on time, and the man in charge left after getting the signal, as agreed," Chandler related. "But the man sent to get them was trapped, and had to clear out and leave them.

"Some one jumped out of the bush and another voice, sounded like a woman's, he said, called for him to stop. He barely escaped. I don't think he was identified, but I didn't dare order a move for fear we'd been betrayed and would be caught. Send a discreet tracer over the road to see if he can locate the goods. Don't have him make a move to claim them unless it's perfectly safe. There may be a trap there. Set another tracer after the traitor."

Chandler hung up. The professor looked at Priestley triumphantly.

"What did I tell you?" he remarked tauntingly. "You see Chandler is as much in the dark as we are. I wonder, now, what could have happened to that van."

He looked speculatively through the open door to where Miss Stimson sat bent over her notes. I was afraid for a moment that he might be about to question her, but Judge Tanner claimed his attention.

The judge had connected with the underground clubroom and repeated Chandler's news to one of the black-robed brethren who immediately busied himself with a series of cryptic calls. As a result a swift airplane left an up-town hangar an hour later, its passenger an innocent-looking traveling salesman for the New York Sun Motor Company. He flew over Putnam County back and forth for hours at a three-mile level, his plane blurred by a thin screen of vapor, scouring the earth with a powerful field-glass.

At the same time the New York State Agency for the Heatless Light Company decided suddenly to put its field force on for an intensive house to house campaign in Putnam County. Every canvasser, our records showed, was a member of the crime trust.

Also, during the day, word was sent in cipher to every district representative in the country, and the dragnet was thoroughly set for the missing van.

Meanwhile we, as well as the agents for the trust, were scouring every edition of the papers for a story of the finding of a mysterious van loaded with treasure. But the day passed without news, and the day lengthened into a fruitless week. The judge took all his meals at the Riccadona, and had long conferences with Chandler, which brought them nowhere.

During all this time the trust company continued doing business without the slightest suspicion of its loss.

At length, on the eighth night after the disappearance of the van, Tanner got a call from a man in the secret clubroom who was a new one to us. Apparently, from the conversation that followed, he was in charge of a section appointed to ferret out and punish traitors. In the confusion of trying to watch all the complicated communications sent out the day after the robbery, we had evidently overlooked this particular thread in the tangled skein.

"We think we've located a traitor," this man declared. "We haven't positive evidence, but it's pretty strong. We believe he knows nothing of what became of the van later, but probably he had a grievance and tipped off the State police, who nearly caught the man sent to meet the van. We believe the police are keeping the facts from the public, hoping to trap us."

"I'll call you back in a few minutes," said the judge.

Then he switched to Chandler and reported.

"What do you recommend?" Chandler asked.

"We'd better take no chances," the judge advised. "Suppose we're mistaken. Better to sacrifice an innocent man than run the slightest risk of having the lot of us caught."

"You're right," Chandler agreed. "Use your judgment."

Tanner switched back to the detective.

"The order is to take extreme measures," he reported.

The detective left the phone booth and strolled about the main room. After a moment he jogged an elbow of a man he passed, and a few minutes later met him in one of the little council-rooms.

"No. 72 is condemned," the detective said laconically.

"I'll attend to him at once," the other responded in a most matter-of-fact tone. "Any idea who he is?"

"Not the slightest," replied the other. "That's for you to find out."

"I'll shoot a little perfume into his clothes and identify him outside."

"Very good!" agreed the other. We all sat chilled with horror as the sense of impending tragedy dawned on us.

Priestley was the first to speak.

"This is murder!" he gasped. "We must stop it."

"We'll have no exposures at present," Fleckner declared sternly. "We've mixed things up enough already."

Priestley remained silent, but I knew he was unconvinced.

The executioner roamed about the main room until he came upon No. 72 standing in a little group about a billiard-table watching a game. The executioner had taken from his pocket a small atomizer filled with a colorless fluid. Holding this in his hand under his robe he casually walked up behind his victim, and pretending to become absorbed in the game, placed the nozzle of the atomizer against the other's back and pressed the bulb.

"Carrying odors is the one thing the telephonoscope won't do," Fleckner remarked.

The scent must have been a delicate one, for no one about the billiard-table gave any signs of noting an offensive odor. The executioner strolled away after a moment and a little later signaled another man to one side.

"I've put the scent on a victim," he whispered. "Go up and stand at the store end of the exit. Trail any one who comes out that way with the scent on his clothes. I'll take the other exit."

The executioner then left the club, appearing presently in ordinary clothes on the sidewalk in front of the rear entrance to the little tobacco shop. He was a dapper-looking, blond young man, having the appearance of a gilded youth with nothing on his mind. Presently his assistant, a pale dark fellow, rather slouchily dressed, took up his post in the store.

It was over an hour before No. 72 emerged. He went directly to the street, almost brushing against the dapper little man who had been ordered to kill him.

The executioner gave no sign of noticing the heavy, uninteresting-looking stranger who walked by him and down into the street, but we noted that his nostrils dilated and his eyes gleamed with satisfaction. He crossed the avenue leisurely, and keeping his prey in sight, strolled along in the direction he was following.

"Do you mean to say you refuse to prevent a murder?" Priestley demanded, fiercely turning on Fleckner.

The professor winced a little, but held his ground.

"I absolutely refuse," he said. "There is nothing we could do that wouldn't give us away now and spoil our future plans. It's too risky. Anyhow, the fellow deserves death."

Priestley stood over him with clenched fists, his face a blaze of fury.

"I warned you once before," Fleckner interposed hastily, "that if you resist me it will be disastrous to your fortune and your reputation, as well as to the good you hope to accomplish in the world by your investment."

I fully expected to see Priestley defy him at any cost. Instead, after a moment, he pulled himself together and turned on his heel.

"Very well," he muttered. "At any rate I won't stay and see murder committed. I'm going out for a while till it's over."

"Good!" Fleckner exclaimed in relief. "You've stuck too close here. Your nerves are unstrung. Better run home and get some sleep. I'll call you if anything interesting happens."

Priestley went out without another word.

I had a fleeting thought that we ought to keep Priestley covered by one of our rays, but checked the idea without voicing it. Such a suggestion to Fleckner might seem to indicate suspicion of my new friend. Anyhow, the professor and I had about all we could attend to alone. Miss Stimson was in the other room catching up on some neglected records, which left only two of us to keep the ramifications of the trust plot on the screen at once.

I wished many times afterward that I had obeyed my impulse to trail Priestley.

Meantime the victim of the trust's suspicion continued on to his home a few blocks down, went in, and after a little, to bed. His shadower, after carefully studying the surroundings from the outside, entered the apartment-house where his victim had just disappeared and said to the hall attendant:

"I came to call on some one who I think just came in—the thick-set dark gentleman."

"You mean Mr. Gersten?"

"Gersten? Doesn't seem as if that was his name. I met him only once and I've lost his card. I have a business appointment with him. What apartment is he in?"

"Sixtieth floor, apartment 21."

"Oh, that's not he, then. The man I'm after lives on the thirty-first floor. Isn't this apartment-house No. 1,239?"

"Oh, no, it's No. 1,241."

"Ah! I've mistaken the house." He went out hastily with the information he sought. Apparently the blow was not to fall at once, for he took the subway, and a little later reached his own home and went to bed.

But here again our vigilant rays missed something, as it turned out later.

Fleckner, seeing no likelihood of any more excitement that night, left one ray fixed on the sleeping form of Gersten, alias No. 72, another on the underground club, and a third on Gersten's would-be exe-

cutioner. Chandler and Tanner of course also held a place on other sections, but they, too, were asleep.

Fleckner stretched himself wearily, looked at the clock, and called Miss Stimson.

There was no reply.

"She's gone some time ago," I remarked. "It's long past time."

"She should have spoken to me before she went," he said irritably.

At that moment a door slammed outside. There was a clatter of feet in the ante-room. The laboratory door burst open and Miss Stimson hurled herself in.

"They've got him! They've got him!" she cried.

We sprang to our feet in astonishment. "Got whom? What do you mean? Who are they?" demanded the professor.

"Mr. Priestley—he tried to save Mr. Gersten—the trust caught him and took him away in a cab—I tried to trail it—lost it!"

She sank to the floor in a faint."

CHAPTER XIII

At Grips With the Crime Trust

WE stared in doubt and amazement at the limp figure of the girl. Then by common impulse we searched the screen to verify her startling announcement of the kidnaping of Priestley. All was quiet around the apartment house in which Gersten, the condemned trust agent, lived. There was no sign of disturbance in the apartment itself. Gersten was still sleeping peacefully without any appearance of having moved since we last looked at his reflected image.

Fleckner began frantically trying out all the telephonoscope connections we had—the young assassin chief in his home, the underground club, even Chandler. No sign of activity. He even swept the ray up and down the quiet streets radiating from Gersten's home peering in every taxicab, hoping to find the one in which Priestley had been taken prisoner. But that was a futile proceeding begotten of panic and he quickly abandoned it.

Certain it was that Priestley had not arrived home. He made doubly certain of that by searching the house and calling the drowsy butler on the telephone.

Meantime, I was doing what I could to restore the girl to her senses. She revived presently, but it was some time before she could tell a coherent story. Even then she was strangely reticent and evasive at some points in her narrative.

"I heard Mr. Priestley arguing with Professor Fleckner about trying to keep the trust from murdering this man Gersten," she said. "When Mr. Priestley went by my desk something in the way he looked and walked made me think he was going to try to interfere with those murderers all by himself. I knew he would be in great danger. I thought I might help him or at least warn the police if necessary.

"I followed without his knowing it. I don't believe he knows me anyhow with my hat and coat on and my eye-shade off. He went to the public phone booths on the corner and called up Mr. Gersten. I listened in. I can't tell you how I managed it. I learned the secret when I was a telephone manager before I came here. Do you know that Mr. Gersten, this No. 72 we've been watching, is an old friend of Mr. Priestley?

"'Hello, John, this is Tom Priestley,' he said when he got his connection.

"'Why, hello, Tom,' Gersten answered, 'where you been keeping yourself and what do you mean pulling a man out of bed this time of night?'

"'Listen, John,' he said, 'your life's in danger. I've just overheard a gang you've got mixed up with plotting to kill you. They think you've been betraying them. They're watching your place now. I can't tell you any more. You'll know best how to handle it. I advise you to call up the district attorney himself in the morning and get protection. Stay off the street. You'll know how to handle it better than I, anyhow. You know the gang. I'll help you if I can. I think I know a way. I can't tell you more. I'm surprised to find you're in with such a gang, but I can't see you killed!'"

"But," Fleckner broke in, "Gersten didn't talk with any one on the phone. We've been watching him right along. He's been asleep."

"Then it's just as I thought," the girl exclaimed. "One of the trust tapped his phone circuit with an instrument as soon as they located him at home. He disguised his voice and answered instead of Gersten when Mr. Priestley called. That's how they trapped him.

"Mr. Priestley came out of the telephone station and started to walk back here. I watched him from across the street. A man hurried along by him in the same direction and must have sprayed an anesthetic in his face, because Mr. Priestley stopped suddenly and staggered. The strange man turned and caught him before he fell. Just then a cab whirled up. A man stepped out and helped the other man put Mr. Priestley in the cab. Then they both got in and drove away. I started to scream, but saw a policeman coming and knew I mustn't attract the police. They'd kill Mr. Priestley right away if they thought the police were after them. As it is they'll keep him alive for a while and try to discover what he knows. I couldn't find a cab to follow in so I came back here. That's all, but you must find him quick. You must!"

She showed signs of becoming hysterical. We tried to question her, but all she would say was—

"Get your rays to work. Don't bother with me! I don't know any more."

There seemed to be nothing to do but follow her advice. But though we searched for the rest of the night we accomplished nothing more than to verify Miss Stimson's belief that the trust agents had killed the telephone antenna connecting with the instrument in Gersten's apartment by the use of a high power wave sender which burned out the delicate connections. They had then evidently tuned their own outlaw instrument into the same wave length and, as she had surmised, answered his calls. We tried the expedient of calling up his number, but apparently the listeners-in now suspected a trap and refused to answer.

At half-past eight in the morning our screen showed Judge Tanner appearing for breakfast in the private dining-room at the Riccadona. Immediately he called the underground club and got a report from the assassin chief.

"I identified No. 72 and had him trailed. He'll die a natural death within twenty-four hours if you say the word. But something happened again. Things are going wrong and it's getting on my nerves. I'm even beginning to wonder if 72 is guilty. Anyhow he isn't the only one. You know young Tom Priestley, the Priestley millionaire? Well, it seems he's a friend of 72 and tried to call him up late last night and warn him. We cut in and caught Priestley and are holding him for orders.

"The question now is, is Priestley a member of the organization? If he is he's a traitor. If he isn't then there's a leak to the outside and we've got to find it and see how far it's gone and kill as many people as is necessary to stop it or our whole game is up."

Judge Tanner turned pale and trembled visibly as he got this startling information. He thought for some moments before replying.

"I'll call you back," he managed to say at last.

He cut off the assassin chief and rang on Chandler. In a halting manner strangely at variance with the suave judge's usually assured address, he broke the news to his unknown chief who was hardly less affected by it than his subordinate.

"This connects up with the disappearance of the van-load of money," Chandler ruminated. "It's a deeper plot than we thought. Tell your men to keep this Priestley alive till they've got all they can out of him. Find out, if possible, if he belongs to the organization. Try the supreme sign on him. No use to try tracing back through the recruiting chain. Every one is bound to name no names unless of a proven traitor. They'd suspect trickery and refuse for the most part. Get at it quick. Meantime let 72 live till this is cleared up."

Tanner transmitted these orders back to the assassin, who promptly left the clubroom. We followed this fellow closely all day with our ray, but learned nothing of Priestley's whereabouts. He talked with numerous people and telephoned frequently, but apparently when treachery was afoot all members of the trust used excessive precautions. All communications were strictly in a code and quite different from the one he had previously unraveled.

By evening we were in the depths of despair and alarm. Professor Fleckner and I managed to preserve a moderately calm exterior, but Miss Stimson was frankly hysterical over the situation. We sat in the laboratory by the telephonoscope screen all that night, dozing at intervals from sheer weariness but for the most part trying many new but futile angles of ray-search and debating various schemes of learning Priestley's whereabouts and effecting a rescue.

I was all for trying a scheme of scaring some one of the members higher up in the trust into revealing Priestley's hiding-place, by using our ray projector and presenting one of our images, carefully disguised, to the right man.

"But," Fleckner objected, "whom would you approach? Chandler? Tanner? Any of the others whom we have identified positively as concerned in Priestley's disappearance? I doubt if any one of them, even the chief assassin, knows where he is. That detail has been left to agents whom we haven't placed yet. If any one, excepting Chandler himself, was frightened into trying to find Priestley, they'd simply kill him and Priestley's jailer. Then maybe your suggestion might work. Failing that, I'll try the lever on Chandler. I'm not hopeful of the result. Conditions aren't ripe yet for a direct approach to that gentleman, but we can't afford to risk leaving Priestley with them until he breaks down and gives us all away."

I had a feeling as he spoke that the old man was more concerned for his own safety and the success of his schemes than he was for Priestley himself. Nevertheless his argument appealed to me as sound.

It was nearly eight in the morning when I awoke with a start, after a longer doze than usual. Miss Stimson had arisen and crossed over to where Professor Fleckner sat moodily studying the screen. Her hysteria had passed. There was in its place an air of calm determination.

"Professor Fleckner," she announced coolly, "I'll release Mr. Priestley."

"You!" he shouted in amazement.

"How?" I demanded.

"I can't tell you how, not at present anyhow. Just let me go for a while. Meantime keep Mr. Chandler covered closely. You remember he is to be out at conferences all day to-day."

She went out before we recovered sufficiently from our amazement to make any comment.

"What do you make of it?" Fleckner demanded. "Is the girl crazy? She's certainly acted strangely ever since that night when she warned Chandler away from that van-load of money."

"I don't know," I admitted. "I do think she admires our friend Priestley greatly and his danger may have unbalanced her a little. I think it would be wise to keep one of the rays on her while she is out. If she goes wild altogether we can warn a policeman to take her in charge and pay no attention to what she says."

"Good idea," he agreed.

He got Miss Stimson on the screen before she reached the street. We watched her progress from then on with such absorbing interest that it became almost impossible to keep our other rays adjusted properly on all the persons we were trying to watch at once.

The girl went first to her home in an apartment a few blocks away and when she came out again she was veiled and dressed so differently that it was hard to recognize in her, the demure little office mouse of the green eyeshade. She went by subway up to the street corner nearest to Chandler's home. There she ascended to the upper street level and a position in a public telephone station opposite the Chandler home where she could watch it through an open window.

In a little while the President-elect came out, got into his car and was driven away. We had half expected the girl to waylay and plead with him or make some wild threat. Fleckner was on the point of projecting my image before a police officer on the next corner and having the girl apprehended before she took any such disastrous step. But to our relief Chandler was driven off without any move on her part.

Instead we were amazed to see her calmly cross the street and push the announcer button at the Chandler front door.

"I wish to see Mrs. Simmons, the housekeeper,"

she announced with quiet dignity when the butler appeared. "I am a friend of hers."

A few minutes later a gray haired woman of about sixty appeared and regarded her caller with considerable perplexity.

They were in a small reception room off the main hall. The girl stepped past the housekeeper and to that good woman's obvious amazement, softly closed the door.

Then she turned back to the housekeeper and before the latter could protest, she raised a warning hand.

"Don't give me away, Mrs. Simmons. Some one might overhear."

With that she raised her veil.

The woman choked back an exclamation. Her face showed mingled affection and alarm.

"You? Here?" she whispered.

"I had to look inside once more. I watch for him sometimes. I saw him drive away just now. I couldn't resist one more peep. Can't you take me up to his study where he lives so much? If any of the family see me, say it's a young friend of yours you're taking up to your rooms and wanted to show around a little."

The girl's voice trembled and there were tears in her eyes. If she was acting, it was an exceedingly clever bit of work.

Fleckner chuckled dryly.

"Another dark chapter in the good Chandler's life. I certainly am surprised at Miss Stimson, however."

The housekeeper hesitated.

"It's a risk," she said, "but you know I'd do anything for you, Ruth."

The good woman was weeping quietly.

"That's the same dear old Mrs. Simmons!" the girl exclaimed, patting her on the shoulder.

Mrs. Simmons opened the door and peered out. There was no one in the hall. She motioned the girl to follow and they went cautiously out and up a rear elevator that led directly into Chandler's study on the top floor.

The girl sank in a chair and gazed raptly about her for some minutes. Finally she roused herself with an effort and glanced at her watch.

"Oh, I promised to phone a friend at ten!" she exclaimed. "May I use this one?"

She indicated the booth containing the phone with the secret attachments through which we had so often watched Chandler issue orders to his followers.

"Why certainly, dearie," the housekeeper agreed.

Miss Stimson entered the booth, closed the sound-proof door and then, to our sudden illumination, twisted the ring that threw on the secret connection with the little dining-room at the Riccadona where Judge Tanner was just finishing his breakfast.

A moment later she was giving orders to the deluded agent of the crime trust in the same husky half-whisper in which the real head of that disreputable band was wont to issue his mandates.

CHAPTER XIV

Miss Stimson Uses Direct Methods

THE sheer audacity of the girl took our breath away. What her former connection with the Chandler household had been I could not imagine, for the sinister suggestion made by Fleckner somehow did not ring true. My instincts rebelled against it. Then there was the evident respect of that manifestly conventional Mrs. Simmons.

But another possibility flashed into my mind. Had this girl all along been an agent of the crime trust spying upon us? Would that account for the episode of the treasure van? If so why had she not betrayed us long before? On the other hand she was now evidently working against the organization. Had her devotion to Priestley, which I had been quietly noting, converted her to our side? I wondered if Professor Fleckner had thought of these startling possibilities and what action he might take.

But be all that as it might, her quick feminine mind had grasped a simple and direct plan of action and she had the courage to carry it out promptly. We gasped in admiration at her boldness and ingenuity as we listened to the orders she was giving to Judge Tanner over the secret telephone.

"I've just got some important information about our latest prisoner, young Priestley," she whispered, and from Judge Tanner's expression it was evident that he was entirely deceived by the disguised voice. "He is refusing to give information about the rest of his crowd because he expects to be rescued soon. They had advance information somehow as to where he was to be hidden and they have a number of our men spotted. We've got to make a quick shift and get him in the hands of an entirely new group that they're not yet wise to. My plan is to let him escape and pull the old crowd off his trail altogether. Then while he's free he'll go straight to his men. My new bunch of trailers will follow and we'll grab the whole gang. What do you think of that scheme?"

"An excellent one!" Tanner agreed, enthusiastically.

"That girl has a great head!" Fleckner exclaimed. "I never half appreciated her before. But I don't quite understand it. I don't think I can ever trust her again. She's too clever and women are flighty, variable creatures at best. And there's been some sort of tie between her and Chandler. That's evident."

Fleckner was too absorbed in present happenings to follow out his reasoning but for me a sudden light was shed on her hysterical performance which had frightened Chandler away from the treasure van that night just as he was about to lead us to the main treasure. The girl, I was convinced, had acted with a purpose on that occasion. She had not wanted Chandler to guide us to the Treasures of Tantalus. Was it sentiment for Chandler that prompted her or had she an interest in the treasure itself? That was what bothered me. At any rate, she seemed now to be acting in our behalf.

But was she? That was another question that popped into my head a second later. Priestley, released from the trust, would be in her power. Was he safe there? Or was the girl a deserter from the trust and was now a member of a rival gang which, through her aid, had stolen the treasure van and was now cleverly using Professor Fleckner's great invention for its own ends?

That last fleeting suspicion seemed at that moment so fantastic that I instantly dismissed it and gave my undivided attention to the screen again.

"This is my plan," the girl was saying. "Follow closely and act quickly. There's no time to lose.

Get your present attendants on Priestley out of the way as far and fast and secretly as you can. Look out for trailers. Have a new man bring him in a cab down to the Esplanade in Van Cortlandt Park, arriving there exactly at noon. My new men will be on hand to trail him to his gang. Right at the center of the Esplanade in front of the Wright statue have him slow down and tell Priestley that he had been ordered to take him away and kill him, but that he couldn't commit murder, so he was going to rebel and let him escape. Then have him untie Priestley and turn him loose. Have the man drive away as quickly as possible. My other men will do the rest."

Tanner agreed without comment as was his custom on getting commands from Chandler. His careful repetition of the orders to his agent in the underground club made it evident that he suspected nothing wrong.

But again from there on we lost the trail in the confusion of multiple messages all in code. This time, however, it was not important that we should trace the orders further.

For promptly at noon, we enjoyed the immense relief of seeing Miss Stimson's directions carried out to the letter.

Van Cortlandt Park Esplanade, even in those days, was thronged with noon-hour strollers from the factories along its southern margin, and a steady stream of motors filled its roadways. Miss Stimson could not have chosen a better place in which to carry out her scheme than this spot where any slightly unusual occurrence would pass unnoticed in the throng. For a half hour before the appointed time we swept the locality with our ray, studying every loiterer to see if we recognized a known trust agent, but we failed to see any familiar face or suspicious character.

It was exactly twelve o'clock when a cab, which had been circling slowly around the Esplanade, drew up and stopped for a moment in front of the Wright statue.

The door opened and Priestley stepped out, a pale and haggard Priestley, but with bearing undaunted. He stood for a moment in front of the statue and looked about him suspiciously. The cab drove rapidly away.

Just then he noticed Miss Stimson strolling toward the statue. She was dressed differently than in the morning, but was still veiled. Catching sight of Priestley, she stepped up to him briskly.

"Good morning," she greeted him cheerily. "You are a little late." Then she added quickly in an undertone, "It's Miss Stimson. Don't look surprised. You're safe now but we can't be too careful."

Priestley rose to the occasion and checked his momentary confusion with a laugh.

"I didn't see you coming and you startled me," he said. "I'm sorry I'm late. What can I do to atone?"

"You can buy me a nice luncheon at Briarcliff Inn. My car is right over here. I'm going to show you how fast a real lady can drive."

This debonair, easy-speaking young woman was still another Miss Stimson to us. I realized more than ever that the girl was a consummate actress.

She led the way across to the parking station and they entered a swift-looking little coupé. The girl backed the car skilfully out of the line and it glided swiftly away northward.

Then, just as we swung the ray forward to follow the speeding coupé a cab flashed on the other side of the screen breaking all speed limits in defiance of the traffic officer at the southern entrance of the Esplanade.

"Better throw on another ray and investigate that cab," Professor Fleckner directed anxiously as he adjusted the ray he was controlling, so that we might keep a close-up of Miss Stimson's coupé on the screen.

I swung in a second ray and as I picked up the interior of the cab, my instinctive fear was realized. It was the cab which had brought Priestley to the Wright statue just now, still driven by the man who had released him. This man's face was a picture of desperate fear. Beside him sat another man, registering both anger and alarm in his pugnacious countenance. They were both straining their eyes toward Miss Stimson's fleeing car into which they had evidently seen Priestley enter.

The situation was as evident as though it had been told in words. Miss Stimson's haste had been justified. Somewhere along the line the crime trust's momentarily deluded gang had discovered the trick played on them. The second man in the pursuing cab had evidently been sent in haste to undo the error and arrived near the scene in time to meet the man who had just released Priestley.

And for the moment it seemed that Miss Stimson's clever artifice had been wasted. All unconscious of pursuit, she was driving northward as fast as speed regulations permitted, but far too slowly to keep ahead of the pursuing cab for more than a few minutes.

The crime trust's agent, in his desperation, hurled speed regulations to the winds. Pedestrians fled in every direction. Vehicles shot toward the curbing to the right and left.

"Warn the girl! I'll get a traffic officer after the cab!" I shouted to Fleckner above the tumult of the crowd and the snorting of motor-horns that filled our little room from our sounding screen as though we were actually on the edge of the throng.

Fleckner projected his voice into the coupé, warned the girl with a word, and in terror she threw her car into full speed and shot out of the Esplanade into a park road, with the swiftness of an airplane. At that she was barely holding her own against the swiftly pursuing cab.

In less than a minute, some quarter of a mile away, I located a motor-cycle traffic-officer, trundling his machine leisurely along, the speeders hidden from his sight by a clump of shrubbery.

To avoid creating public consternation by a seeming miracle I projected my image among the bushes and seemed to step out of them into the path of the officer.

"There's a speeder playing havoc with the crowd over there!" I shouted excitedly, pointing across the Esplanade.

Without a question he jumped on his cycle and was gone like a flash. Hopefully I drew my image back into the bushes and cut off the projector. If the officer should overhaul and arrest the driver of the cab, it would give our friends a chance after all.

Breathlessly Fleckner and I followed the triple race on our screen; the coupé slowly losing its lead over the recklessly driven cab, but—thank Heaven!—the motor-cycle gaining on it much more rapidly.

They left Van Cortlandt Park behind and flew up

the Yonkers Boulevard. A few minutes later they were swinging perilously around the sharp curves of the Westchester Park drives.

Meantime Miss Stimson, behind the screen of her car top, had been ordering a lightning change act that seemed rather futile under the circumstances. Under her directions Priestley had hauled a feminine outfit—cape, skirt, hat, veil and gloves—from under the seat and put them on over his own clothing. Without too close inspection he looked like a large-framed middle-aged woman.

Miss Stimson turned the wheel over to him while she changed her own hat, veil and jacket for an assortment of entirely different style. She looked fifteen years older and a dowdy contrast to the trim, stylish figure of a few minutes before.

She evidently hoped to get out of sight of her pursuers long enough to turn about and, in these disguises, give them the slip. Fleckner heartened her by telling her that the motor officer might give her that chance, though a dubious one at best.

Within five minutes that hope seemed about to be realized. The motor-cycle drew along side the cab and its rider signaled the driver to stop. Then our hopes were dashed again.

The second man in the cab turned back his coat lapel and, to our consternation, displayed the badge of a Central Office detective. He shouted something to the motor-cycle officer and the latter, instead of insisting on stopping the cab, let his cycle's speed out another notch and shot by in pursuit of the coupé.

By invoking the aid of the law we had merely made the capture of our friends doubly sure. The trust had played the same game. It was only a matter of minutes now when the motor-cycle would overtake them and Miss Stimson's pitiful little subterfuge would avail them nothing. The pursuers had long since noted the number and style of the car.

But just as I was in despair, the genius of Fleckner again came to the rescue.

"Let me handle your lever a minute, Blair," he exclaimed suddenly. "Get one of those spare lengths of power cable out of the storeroom."

"Now," he directed, when I had brought the small roll containing about a rod of half-inch wire cable, "bend one end so it will hook over that window-catch, then carry the other end across the room stretching it in front of the screen. I'll turn on the magnifier and then project this cable so it appears in image like a two-inch hawser stretched across the road in front of that motor-cycle and cab. That'll stop 'em for a minute, I'll guarantee."

The scheme worked. The motor-cycle and the cab flew around the bend and their drivers saw across the road a few rods ahead, what appeared to be a heavy cable stretched taut at a height that meant a sure wrecking for both vehicles. Brakes screeched and they came to a dead stop within two yards of the apparent obstruction.

All three men swore roundly and stared stupidly at the cable. The speeding coupé in the meantime lengthened its lead by a quarter of a mile.

"They've stopped," Fleckner told Miss Stimson, again projecting his voice into the coupé. "Better slip off on a by-path and trust to throwing them off the scent. They'll be on again in a moment."

"I'll do better than that," replied the girl calmly. She brought the car to a grinding halt, reversed and turned squarely around. She threw over the lever beside the seat and the coupé top folded down out of sight leaving the car looking like an ordinary open roadster. Thereupon she pulled out false number plates from under the seat, hooked them over the old ones and was back in the car in barely a minute.

At the same instant the motor-cycle officer, who by good chance had not yet attempted to touch the unsubstantial cable image, started to shove his machine under the obstruction to go on with the pursuit.

"Snatch it loose and pretend to run," Fleckner directed me.

I jerked the end of the cable off the window-catch and went through a pantomime of running. Professor Fleckner threw my projected image across the park green apparently dragging the cable after me.

"I'll get him! You two go on," shouted the pseudo detective leaping from the cab.

He raced after my image pouring a stream of automatic pistol bullets at it till Fleckner ran it into a thicket and dissolved the thing. How long my supposed pursuer beat about that bush in search of a mirage I don't know, for I had more important matters on hand.

The fellow was barely out of the cab, when it leaped into full speed with the motor-cycle already gaining on it in an effort to make up for lost time.

And around the next bend they barely avoided collision with an open roadster containing apparently a pair of middle-aged ladies to whom they accorded hardly a glance as they swept by.

CHAPTER XV

A Chamber of Horrors

AN hour later, to our immense relief, we welcomed Miss Stimson and Priestley, still in their outlandish disguises, back into the safe shelter of the laboratory. Immediately after meeting their deluded pursuers, they had turned off the road over which they had been fleeing and worked south over a circuitous route until they reached the Getty Square garage where Miss Stimson had rented the car, a new interchangeable model that had admirably suited her purposes. The false number-plates she had made herself with card-board and a little paint.

In returning the car, disguised as she was, she avoided the garage-man's suspicion by saying that she was bringing it back for her sister who had rented it.

In the meantime, as our following ray showed, the motor-cycle officer and the man in the cab ran on for over a mile before they became convinced that they had lost the scent. Then they turned back looking for clues, but of course, in vain. Finally they came to the point where they had dropped the supposed Central Office man. There the motor-cycle officer left them and so did we, for we saw no profit in following them further.

Priestley was too worn and exhausted with his experience to talk at first. Fleckner's man brought him some food which he ate in silence. Then he retired to the room he had been using and slept for twelve hours straight.

Meantime Fleckner, Miss Stimson and I took

turns at watching the screens and resting, but whatever action the chief men of the crime trust had taken on Priestley's escape had been put through while we were distracted by the chase. We never did learn how Chandler found out so soon the trick that had been played on him. By the time we got him and Tanner and the others back on the screen, whatever excitement it had caused had subsided or been suppressed.

Nevertheless, we soon learned that appropriate action had been started.

When Priestley finally awoke, about six the next morning, I had also just finished my last nap of the night. He followed me out into the laboratory where Fleckner sat in front of the screen, which at this hour in the morning showed nothing but a series of pictures of still life—a choice assortment of sleeping villains.

"Where is Miss Stimson? I want to thank her properly for rescuing me. I was too groggy last night," were almost his first words.

"I sent Miss Stimson home about an hour ago," said Fleckner. "She insisted on watching with us on and off all night and she was pretty well worn out to begin with. Too excited to sleep, I guess. I made her go home where she could get away from the atmosphere for a while."

"She's a remarkable young woman," Priestley declared. "Do you know, I've paid so little attention to her that at this moment I hardly know what her face looks like. She wears that confounded eye shade all the time around here and has a veil on whenever she goes out."

"She's a good deal of a mystery," Fleckner admitted. "I don't suppose she explained to you what connection she had with the Chandler household in the past?"

"No, she told me only the barest details of how she fooled Judge Tanner. She said she knew Chandler's housekeeper when she was a little girl and that helped her in getting in. What do you mean?"

Fleckner related in detail what took place in Chandler's house when Miss Stimson entered it the morning before.

"Strange, isn't it?" was Priestley's only comment, but I saw he was deeply disturbed and that he resented Fleckner's innuendoes.

"But come!" the professor demanded impatiently. "What about you? You have the story we're most anxious to hear. What happened when they grabbed you?"

Priestley shuddered. It was some minutes before he answered. When he did it was slowly, falteringly as a sufferer speaks between spasms of pain.

"It's an experience hard to talk about!" he said at last. "What I have to tell won't help us much. It's merely an exposition of what the crime trust will do to a man when it gets him in its clutches."

He paused for a moment and then with visible effort continued:

"During all the time I was in their hands I saw no one, and talked to no one directly, except the man who let me go. I saw him for a moment or two only just before he left me and he was evidently so disguised that I wouldn't recognize him again. They're exceedingly clever in their disguises. I'm convinced that when they have to work together in the open, as when they robbed the trust company, they are disguised even from each other. I haven't the slightest idea where they kept me or how I got there and came away.

"To begin with, I believe Miss Stimson has already told you that No. 72, the man named Gersten, whom the trust condemned as a traitor is, or rather was, an old friend of mine. We were chums in college and for a time I was engaged to his sister, but we broke the engagement by mutual agreement and later she married Paul Tilford, another close friend of mine. Gersten became an electrical engineer and has apparently been quite successful. His wife is an intimate friend of my sister. So you see how close is the tie between us and how great a shock it was when I found, not only that he was a criminal but that he was about to be murdered.

"It may be all right to view a prospective murder impersonally, especially when you feel that the world will be better off with the victim out of the way, but instincts revolted against allowing it to go on and as you remember, I protested. When I realized how helpless I was in the matter and how much greater things were at stake, I gave in.

"But when I found the victim was to be John Gersten, I had to do something. To think that he is one of the criminal defectives! And the others we had discovered in the last few months! It is appalling! It makes one wonder whom he can trust; the whole world seems crime mad under its smug cover of conventional respectability. It makes one distrust his very self.

"At any rate I rushed out from here and did the utterly reckless thing of trying to call up and warn Gersten, you know.

"I came out of the phone booth and started down the street. I vaguely recall meeting a man, who passed me so closely that our elbows almost grazed. I was too preoccupied to notice him at all. And that instant I had a sudden dizzy feeling and then everything went black. That's all I know about my kidnaping. Of course, the man who passed me must have sprayed an anesthetic in my face.

"When I came to I was in total darkness and absolute silence. I might have been in an old-fashioned grave for all I could tell. In fact the close air added to that impression. I was lying on my back, on what seemed to be a slab of stone or concrete. I tried to move but found that my hands and feet were shackled.

"About my head was fastened some sort of contraption that seemed to consist mainly of pads over my ears and mouth, which I thought was to keep me from hearing sounds or calling for help, but I was quickly undeceived.

"Following the instinct to call for help, I tried to cry out and, to my surprise, succeeded amazingly. I emitted a thunderous sound, which seemed to be concentrated in my own ears. It nearly burst my ear drums.

"At that I heard a low chuckle. I stiffened and wrenched at my shackles, but was unable to break free.

"'So you are awake, are you, Priestley?' some one said in a low casual tone, that came apparently from right beside me. I strained my eyes to see him but couldn't make out the slightest outline in the dense blackness.

"'No use yelling your head off or straining yourself trying to break away,' the voice warned; 'that outfit on your head is a telephone receiver and trans-

mitter so that you can hear what we have to say and tell us what we want to know. That's your only connection with the outside world, excepting a tube through which we'll feed you a little air if you want to use it to talk with and talk right.'

"'Where am I?' I demanded.

"Again came the taunting chuckle, but somewhat louder.

"'I can't give you the street and number, very well. It isn't allowed, but, if it'll be any consolation to you, I can tell you that you're in a strong aluminoid coffin buried under ten feet of earth in an unused subcellar. I'm the only one in the world who knows where you are, and I own the building, so you can see what a lively chance of rescue you have.'

"For once in my life I nearly fainted away with horror. I believed instinctively that he was telling the truth, though I never got further proof of it than his bare statement and my own impression of my surroundings.

"'Now, whenever you are ready to tell us who are the rest of your friends who think they know some of our secrets, I will listen and if what you tell me is true, your situation will be made easier for you,' went on the voice.

"Just what I said in reply doesn't matter. I gave him to understand he had better kill me at once and save his time as I wasn't the kind of yellow dog who would find life tolerable after he had betrayed his friends. That wasn't, as a matter of fact, as heroic as it sounds, for I knew how badly they wanted to know the names of their enemies. They could gain nothing by killing me, for as long as they kept me a prisoner I could do them no harm. On the other hand if they did kill me, they'd lose their only present chance of learning the names of those who were endangering their whole organization. If I gave them the information, they'd have no further use for me and would doubtless promptly kill me. I knew they would try to keep me alive in the hope of finally breaking down my resistance. Every moment gained was giving you people so much more chance of rescuing me. I didn't realize the chances against the rescue or the torture I would go through meantime or I think I would have wished to die right then."

Priestley paused and shuddered again at the recollection of it.

"Did either of you ever happen to use that instrument of misery the old-fashioned wired telephone, whose connections were made by hand at switchboards—one of those complicated contrivances, generally out of order and at best working in most haphazard fashion, from which our fathers suffered a century ago? You may remember them as a boy, Professor Fleckner. Blair may have seen one in a museum. Well, when I was a youngster, about fifteen, I ran across a short line of that sort while traveling with my father in a back-woods section of northern Alaska. I remember well the mixture of buzz, clack and rattle that nearly split my ear-drums while the so-called 'Central' was trying, quite often in vain, to 'get a number,' with an especially violent attack preceding her frequent announcement that 'the line is busy.'

"Well, the telephone instrument that was attached to my head had the same set of tricks. Whether it was really an old-fashioned early-twentieth-century affair, I don't know. You have read of the ancient practise of torturing prisoners by a steady drip, drip of water on the shaven skull, or of the amiable art of tickling a victim to death, or driving him insane by continuous light taps on the soles of his feet. I am sure I would have welcomed those methods—any or all of them—in preference to that infernal crackling in my ears that kept up hour after hour, broken only at intervals when my torturer paused to ask me if I was ready to talk.

"Finally I seemed to lose all sense of hearing as such. Each click of the instrument was marked by a sharp pain that seemed to shoot through my skull and down every nerve in my body to my very toes. I tottered on the verge of delirium, but fought against it with all my remaining will.

"At last I must have lapsed into momentary unconsciousness. I came to again with a name on my lips. I knew, that in my half-consciousness, I had spoken aloud the name of some acquaintance, but whose I did not know, nor do I know now. And I am half crazy with the fear that I may in that instant have betrayed one of you."

He stopped again and rubbed his head slowly like a man still in a daze, his face a picture of utter misery. Fleckner and I looked at each other, and each read in the other's face an uneasy echo of Priestley's fear.

CHAPTER XVI

The Crime Trust Invokes the Law

THE rest of Priestley's story made little impression on me. I was too absorbed in speculation as to what he might have said in that moment of half-delirium. Had we been betrayed, and could we expect at any moment some insidious attack by the gang?

I gathered, half hearing, that when Priestley came to with the unrecognized name on his lips, the clicking of the telephone instrument had ceased. It must have been at about that moment that word came to the watcher above his prison-grave to release him, for he became conscious of a sweetish, suffocating vapor, evidently an anesthetic sent down through the tube mentioned by his tormentor. He lost consciousness completely this time, and did not recover it again until he had been carried in the cab almost to the point where he was let go.

His story completed, he sat back exhausted and listened apathetically to Fleckner and myself discussing our next steps. The possibility that one or more of our names, in addition to Priestley's, was in the possession of the crime trust was the most serious thing to consider.

We were keeping the crime trust principals on the screen as usual, but recent events had made them more than ever cautious, and we gleaned nothing of value as to their information and plans. Our chief dread was that Priestley had let slip the name of Professor Fleckner. In that case we could expect an attack on the laboratory at any moment. What insidious form it would take we could not imagine, and hence could not prepare very intelligently to meet it.

One thing was certain. If Fleckner had been betrayed and the secret of the telephonoscope discovered by the trust, our game was up.

"At the least," I said, "we must all stay hidden here at the laboratory. Priestley certainly can't show his face in public until we've got this bunch nipped. I advise keeping even your servants shut in on some pretext or other."

"Right!" Fleckner agreed; "and we must use extreme caution in answering both the door and telephones. I'll have Miss Stimson stand guard over those matters."

"But Miss Stimson is out!" Priestley cried in sudden alarm. "We must get her back at once. They may have her name and be after her now."

He sprang for the telephone, unmindful of his physical weakness.

Fleckner made a move as if to stop him, but immediately seemed to think better of it.

"Don't say who's calling," he warned Priestley instead. "I instructed her when I hired her to keep her employment absolutely secret."

Miss Stimson lived alone at an apartment hotel. In a moment Priestley had the desk clerk there on the phone and asked for her.

After listening to the clerk's report he hung up and turned back to us, his face even paler than before.

"They say she isn't there, and hasn't been in her room for several days."

"Then they've got her!" I exclaimed.

Priestley sank into a chair and dropped his face in his hands, too overcome to speak.

Professor Fleckner was lost in thought, but said nothing, and his masklike countenance betrayed no emotion.

"The poor girl!" I exclaimed. "They'll torture her horribly! There must be some way of rescuing her!"

"I'll give myself up in exchange," Priestley declared. "Let me at the instrument."

He went to the switchboard of the telephonoscope and threw over the control lever. Professor Fleckner watched him with a sardonic smile.

But to our bewilderment nothing happened in response to Priestley's manipulation of the levers. The screen remained blank.

Fleckner chuckled.

"It won't work, will it?" he taunted. "You see, I have noted that you boys didn't quite approve of my methods and might get rebellious. So while you slept, I changed the combination of the instrument so that no one but me can work it hereafter.

"Furthermore, I had this apartment built over some years ago when I began making secret inventions. I didn't propose to have my ideas stolen. The doors and windows have secret electric locks, steel bars that thrust across them out of the interior of the adjacent walls, so that it's as impossible to get out as in. I've just pressed a secret button that puts those locks in operation. I've also pressed another button that put our phone out of commission and another summoning James and his able assistant. Here they are."

Into the laboratory came James, the gigantic ex-athlete whom Fleckner employed as butler and valet. With him was another man equally competent-looking, from a physical standpoint.

"James," said his employer, "some gentlemen on the outside are trying to get at our secrets or kidnap us or both. I've told you a little about it already. I've thrown all the outside locks and cut off the phone. You may break the news to the cook. He will get his regular food supplies up the delivery tube as usual and send back a written order for each day, so we won't starve. These two young gentlemen are friends of mine, but don't quite agree with me just now. Keep them under guard, especially while they are in the laboratory. They'll have access to this and their two bedrooms only. You take the day watch and John the night watch."

Then he turned to us.

"I think I understand some things a little better than you boys," he said. "I think I can guarantee that Miss Stimson will suffer no serious harm before I rescue her. I also think I can control the crime trust pretty well from now on, and I don't propose to have any misguided interference."

Priestley threw up his hands and gave in without further words, and I followed his example.

At that moment the newspaper delivery tube clicked and dropped the morning papers on the table back of us. We each picked up one and sat down to read, not expecting much of interest in the news that found its way into print. It served rather as a welcome distraction from the tension.

But on this particular morning, we found that, instead of furnishing distraction, the news bore vitally on our troubles. At last the crime trust's activities had broken into public print.

Not that the startling tales on the front pages would reveal to the uninitiated the handiwork of that evil coterie. Even I read for some distance into the first item that caught my eye before I suspected it. The heavy three-column head ran:

TWELVE RICH MEN VANISH;
VICTIMS OF KIDNAPING PLOT.

In the last twenty-four hours, it seemed, reports had come to police headquarters, one after the other, of the mysterious disappearance of a dozen of the best known business men or bankers in the city. Ten of them had responded to mysterious telephone calls at their offices, hurrying out without any explanations, and saying they would be back within an hour or so. None of them had been seen or heard of since.

The remaining two, so office associates testified, had received calls of a mysterious nature to which they had refused to respond. One of them was driving home from the theater that night when his car was stopped by a pair of masked men in a quiet spot. He had been dragged out of his car and carried off before his frightened family, who were with him, realized what was happening.

The other had been called to his door just before retiring, by a thick-set, bearded man, as the butler described him, who refused to come in. When the master failed to return after some time, the butler went to the door to find him gone. He had not been heard of since.

I read the list of the victims over twice before its significance dawned on me. I had copied the list of names on my memorandum pad in this very room less than a year ago. It was a complete catalogue of the men Fleckner had invited to witness the first exhibition of the telephonoscope on that memorable New Year's Eve.

"Why," I exclaimed, "this is the crime trust's work! They've caught every man, excepting ourselves, who knows anything at all of the existence of the telephonoscope."

"Huh?" grunted Fleckner. "Oh, you are reading the other story. I was reading the one on the right-hand side of the page."

The old man had turned deadly pale. I saw him visibly frightened for the first time.

Then, before I could turn to the account that had caused this remark, I heard a groan from Priestley. He, too, was staring at head-lines opposite the ones that had just bowled me over. I noted them now for the first time, and my own feelings were hardly less acute than that of my companions.

This is what caught my eye:

THOMAS PRIESTLEY, MULTIMILLIONAIRE, FLEES JUSTICE AFTER INDICTMENT

Accused of obtaining huge fortune by fraud, he escapes officers after thrilling auto race through city parks

The crime trust, defeated in its purpose to hold Priestley an illegal prisoner, had laid a clever plot and invoked the aid of the law against him.

CHAPTER XVII

Fleckner Usurps the Crime Throne

PRIESTLEY controlled himself with difficulty while we read the two stories through. According to the second article, a cousin of Priestley's—evidently the one whose life we had saved from the Bolshevik outlaws on that Pacific island last New Year's Eve—had just returned to civilization after long isolation in the South Seas. He had learned for the first time that Thomas Priestley held the family fortune by virtue of the signatures of the other descendants. Thereupon he had gone to the district attorney's office and declared he had never signed the release.

It was significant that he fell into the hands of Assistant District Attorney Winter, accredited member of the crime trust's inner councils. Winter investigated the alleged signature of the returned cousin on the release document, and his expert had pronounced it a forgery. Moreover, it was shown that on the date the signature was signed, December 31, 1999, the cousin was in the South Seas and the paper had been filed long before it could possibly have reached New York from there. The reader will remember that this cousin, like the other two, signed the projected shadow of the release and that the signature was actually recorded by a photographic process on real paper in New York.

The grand jury being in session, an indictment had been jammed through immediately and an order for arrest obtained. Priestley, not being found in his usual haunts and not having been seen there for several days, a general alarm had been sent out for him. A detective had seen him that noon getting into a car with a heavily veiled young woman whose identity was unknown. He had summoned help and given chase.

Then a strange thing had happened, proof of a carefully worked out conspiracy. The story went on to tell how the detectives had been foiled by a heavy cable stretched across the road.

It was a plausible tale and sensational in the extreme. It not only ruined Priestley's reputation, both by direct statements and countless cleverly put and evidently inspired innuendoes, but from a legal standpoint seemed to present a pretty clear case against him, that could be contested only by exposing the secret of the telephonoscope, which in the present circumstances would do more harm than good.

Further than that, the only persons who could testify as to the genuineness of the signature of Priestley's cousin, barring Fleckner, Priestley, and myself, had been kidnaped, so that nothing of that sort would interfere with the trust's plans. I pointed this out to Fleckner.

"And in addition to that," I went on, "if they knew enough about us to capture all the men who are in the secret, they certainly know your connection with it and will be after us at once. I only wonder they haven't been here already."

"Quite so," Fleckner agreed. "Their delay is probably caused by the necessity for keeping such moves secret. Well, we'll prove an alibi as far as this place is concerned."

"James," he directed, "tell the cook to order enough food staples sent up this morning to last about a month, together with the canned and concentrated supplies we have on hand. Then you bring a couple of trunks and a bag out here, and you and John and the cook put on your own things and get your valises. Then call up and have a big motor hack down at the door in half an hour. Tell them we want to catch the ten thirty at the Pennsylvania Station."

Priestley looked up in amazed alarm.

"You're not going to attempt to leave," he exclaimed, "and keep me locked up here alone?"

"Keep your seat, Thomas," Fleckner reassured him. "I'm going to do nothing of the sort. The management of the building and the crime trust sleuths are simply going to think they see us departing. Oh, by the way, James—also call up the superintendent and tell him we're going away for a month or so, taking a trip down through the Andes or any other remote place that sounds good to you."

A half-hour later Fleckner turned on the telephonoscope and got the front entrance of the building on the screen. The motor hack he had ordered stood waiting. Fleckner's two men brought one of the trunks in front of the screen and went through the motions of walking while the professor turned on the projector and sent their images out into the hall down the elevator and out to the hack. He held the image of the trunk in the hack, while, with another ray, he brought the images of the men back up to the laboratory to go through the motions with the other trunk.

Then all four of us carrying bags were projected in image down aboard the hack. Fleckner told the chauffeur to draw down the curtains and drive to the Pennsylvania Station. The professor kept our images and those of the trunks and bags aboard the hack all the way to the station.

"This is on my account at the livery," he said to the driver on the hack's arrival at the station. He could not, of course, satisfy the man with shadow money. "By the way, while I'm having the baggage

taken in, would you mind telephoning for me? I've just time to catch the train. Call up the superintendent of my building and tell him that my attorney, Mr. Forsyth, will attend to my rent while I'm gone. I forgot to tell him. Add a dollar for yourself to my bill."

This, of course, was mere by-play to get the driver away long enough to dissolve our images without causing him undue astonishment.

All this time Fleckner had kept another ray playing about, watching for trailers of the hack, but if the trust had any emissaries watching our supposed movements we failed to catch them at it.

"Well," Fleckner said at last, "it looks as if we were all snug and could defy the trust indefinitely. If they try breaking in here illegally, they'll get an unpleasant surprise. If they try invoking the law through a permit to secure evidence, I have another sort of surprise.

"As for your case, Priestley, don't worry about it. I will arrange to have no further action taken on it until you are caught, which will be never unless I see fit. When we're good and ready, provided you make me no more trouble, we'll clear your name in such spectacular fashion that there'll be no doubt left in the public mind."

"Do you mind telling us how you expect to accomplish all these marvels?" Priestley asked rather sarcastically.

"You'll see, little by little," the professor replied imperturbably. "From now on I am the real head of the crime trust, I'm going to rule with a lightning rod. I'm going to stand it on its head. And all not without profit to myself. For the Treasure of Tantalus is mine to have and to hold."

Priestley and I remained silent. We had learned by now the unwisdom of arguing with him. There was a wild, almost mad, gleam in the old man's eyes. I wondered if the vision of too much power had unbalanced his reason. Or had we, in our desire to root the hidden criminals from society, put ourselves in the hands of a master criminal?

Priestley and I often discussed these questions cautiously between ourselves during the coming weeks when we were alone together in one of our rooms and were sure the old man was preoccupied with his screen.

And as the days went, evidence piled up that this old genius who had so enthusiastically started on the hunt for high-grade defectives, had himself developed a defective streak. I began to wonder more than ever who of us was immune from this obscure mental malady. There were times when I found myself applying tests to myself to see if I was morally normal.

All that day, after Fleckner had put his house in order for a possible siege, he sat by his desk in deep thought, now and then making notes on a pad. During that time he made no use at all of the telephonoscope. He was evidently, as we came to learn later, planning out the details of one of the most ambitious bids for power that the world has ever known, a campaign that had for its aim the subjection of society, holding its privacy for ransom.

At six o'clock that evening he sprang suddenly into action. He retired to his bedroom for a moment, and when he returned, we were amazed to see him attired in a black robe and mask like those worn in the crime trust's secret clubroom.

"I'm going to pay some of my new subjects a visit," he remarked casually as he sat down at the telephonoscope switchboard.

He then switched on the ray by a new and complicated combination device of which we could make nothing, though we watched closely. At once the private dining-room at the Riccadona was on the screen. Then we sat and waited.

A half-hour later Judge Tanner, Dorgan and Winter entered. They removed their overcoats and sat down. They had just turned to their menu cards when Professor Fleckner arose, turned on his projector, and clapped his hands.

The trio of rascals at the little table miles away leaped to their feet in startled amazement just as the heavy draperies of one of the windows seemed to melt silently into the frames and a black-robed, masked figure stepped off the sill and stood before them.

"Pray, sit down, gentlemen. Don't be alarmed," he commanded in a good imitation of the hoarse whisper Tanner had heard so many times over the secret telephone circuit.

The three obeyed, pale and shaken.

"I am the Man Higher Up, before you in person at last," announced the apparition solemnly. "I never expected to give you a personal interview here. You remember I said to you, Judge Tanner, on election night, that I would like very much to thank you in person, but that it was not possible. You and Mr. Dorgan made it clear when you initiated Mr. Winter here that it wasn't done."

The three winced at hearing their names pronounced in this offhand manner. They had evidently believed that the Man Higher Up was as ignorant of their identity as they were of his.

Priestley and I, standing behind the black-robed figure of the real Fleckner and peering over at his projected image on the screen, hardly dared breathe lest the slightest sound from us be likewise projected into the tense atmosphere of the little dining-room, miles away, and mar the illusion the professor was creating.

"But new conditions have arisen," the black-robed image went on, while his hearers, their first terror subsiding, stared at the blank mask in hypnotized fascination. "Somewhere in this carefully worked out organization, a leak has sprung. It has proven so mysterious and baffling that I dared not use our regular indirect methods in conducting a conference. So I am here, though you will appreciate the wisdom of my concealing my personality.

"In the first place, Judge Tanner, don't use this secret telephone circuit again. I'm afraid it's unsafe. Recent events make me think some of our telephone communications have been tapped. When I need to confer with you I'll call you on the regular telephone at your home or your chambers and simply ask: 'Has there been a decision in that last case yet?' You will simply answer that there has not and hang up.

"Then you will come immediately to this room. I'll be here. When you have orders to transmit to your helpers below, I'll see that they get there. I'm explaining to them also that they must not use the phones for organization business till this mystery has been cleared up."

Priestley and I looked at each other, unwilling admiration in our faces. At one clever stroke

Fleckner had cut Chandler off from all communication with the crime trust of which he had been the head.

"Now," the apparition went on, "I've decided on a different course toward the prisoners we are holding. We'll have no executions and no more tortures. We'll keep them comfortable. Make each one think some one else has confessed and promise him immunity if he'll corroborate the confession."

"Prisoners?" Tanner asked, finding his voice for the first time. "We have only one prisoner—Gersten—and I was about to report to you to-night that we've proved him innocent and ask your permission to release him."

"Ah!" Fleckner exclaimed. "I'm glad to hear it. Release him, by all means. By prisoners I meant also Priestley. I forgot for a moment I had not yet told you my special corps has just recaptured him. So we are safe from him personally, but he has friends we must catch. By the way, Winter, let that indictment lie idle until I give the word; I may decide to have it quashed. Have you learned anything new as to the methods by which our secrets are leaking out or how Priestley escaped?"

"Not a thing," Tanner admitted. "We are still absolutely in the dark."

"Didn't Priestley make any remark under torture that could give you a clue?" pursued the pseudo crime trust chief.

Tanner looked distinctly uncomfortable, and hesitated.

"I trust you are not trying to conceal anything," Fleckner went on sharply.

"I won't conceal anything," Tanner admitted, "but first may I beg immunity from the usual punishment for having obtained forbidden knowledge? I can't believe anyhow, that what Priestley said was true."

Priestley clutched my arm convulsively. We were about to learn what my friend had revealed in his delirium, that half-remembered shouting of a name which haunted him ever since with the fear that he had betrayed one of us.

"Have no fear," Fleckner consoled Tanner. "This is an unusual occasion. We must grasp at any straw of information we can get. I'll see that all precedent is waived in this case."

"Well, then," Tanner faltered, "the young man shouted once, just as he was coming out of a semi-delirious stupor brought on by his suffering. The attendant heard him clearly, so there's no mistake. 'Mortimer Chandler, President-elect of the United States, is the real head of the crime trust,' is what he said."

CHAPTER XVIII

Chandler Springs a Surprise

PROFESSOR FLECKNER started visibly at this announcement that Priestley, in his delirium, had revealed to the members of the crime trust the carefully guarded name of their mysterious chief. Priestley and I, as well as the three uneasy figures around the table in the little dining-room, waited breathlessly for his reply.

He was not quick to make it. For some moments he stood in silence, evidently debating how he should meet this unexpected situation. At length he spoke solemnly, deliberately.

"It has been our policy neither to affirm nor to deny guesses as to the identity of any of our members, but to punish swiftly those who venture to guess. This case is different. I feel that I should set you right.

"I am troubled to know that young Priestley has learned so much as to guess rightly at the existence of our secret organization, and that we are interested in Mortimer Chandler, whom for our purposes, we have put up for President of the United States. For the rest of his delirious statement, while he was buried alive and under nerve racking torture, it's at most a very bad guess. Chandler and I are not one and the same person at all, nor does he even dream who I am. I am head of the crime trust, as our prisoner was pleased to call it. Therefore Chandler is not. That's all for now. Follow my instructions, and I'll appoint another meeting soon."

His image backed to the window. Again the draperies seemed to melt and he vanished. He threw off the projector, snatched off his black mask, and turned to us, wiping beads of sweat from his face.

"Well," he remarked with great satisfaction, "I've spiked Chandler's guns and found out what I wanted to know. The gentlemen of the crime trust haven't learned a thing about the telephonoscope, and never will, for every one who knows anything about it is safely out of their reach."

"But," Priestley protested in bewilderment, "what about Miss Stimson and the twelve men who were present at the demonstration on New Year's Eve? I thought we were satisfied they were in the power of the trust? Have they escaped?"

"You mean you were satisfied," Fleckner chuckled. "I might as well tell you about that now. They have not escaped. They were never kidnaped by the trust, for the simple reason that I took good care that they shouldn't be by kidnaping them first myself."

"What!" I exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that all this time you have known where Miss Stimson was?"

"Exactly," he agreed. "Miss Stimson never left this building that night I said I sent her home while you and Priestley slept, nor has she since. She is perfectly safe and comfortable, though rather closely confined. You see, I rent four adjoining apartments in this house. The twelve missing gentlemen are here also. Ten of them came unsuspectingly in response to my telephone invitation, of which the papers spoke; the other two dallied, so they had to be carried here by my two men, James and John, incidents which the papers also told about luridly. The safety of all of us depended on such precautions, to say nothing of the success of my future plans."

The feelings of Priestley and myself were too mixed to allow us to speak. We stared at the professor in amazed silence. Then another suggestion intruded itself in my mind.

"And the disappearance of the two-million-dollar treasure van after Chandler was scared off? Was that also engineered by you?" I asked.

"Exactly," he agreed. "When we were watching Chandler on his way to meet the treasure van, I had John and James—who, by the way, are expert aeronauts—in a swift plane of mine in my hangar on the roof of this building, ready to fly to the spot the moment Chandler revealed to us the hiding-place of the main treasure. When I saw there was no hope that Chandler or any agent of his would dare try to

go back to the van after he was frightened by Miss Stimson, I decided I wouldn't let an unclaimed treasure, even a paltry two million dollars, lie around idle. So after you and Priestley were asleep, I directed the boys to fly out and retrieve the van and take it to a good hiding-place of my own, where it now lies safe."

This boasting confession, too, Priestley and I received in silence. I remember wondering at this in Priestley's case, such a sharp contrast to his usual vehement protests against Fleckner's doubtful methods, which now had passed quite beyond the doubtful stage. I was disturbed, too, by my own acquiescence.

I no longer had any doubts that Fleckner had passed into the ranks of pronounced criminal defectives. What disturbed me almost as much was the fear that Priestley and myself were to some degree infected with the germs of the same defectiveness.

Professor Fleckner was now busy with further plans. After consulting his notes and spending a few minutes in thought, he turned again to the telephonoscope control board and brought the home of Mortimer Chandler on the screen. Chandler was shown alone in his study hard at work over some reports. A hasty search about the house with the rays made it apparent that the family and his secretary were out for the evening. The servants were in their own quarters in a distant part of the house.

"A very opportune moment for visiting my predecessor on the crime trust throne and letting him know he is out of office," chuckled the professor. "Also, I may add, this is the evening in which I take over officially, the custody of the Treasures of Tantalus."

He slipped on his black mask again, got a heavy automatic pistol from the storeroom, which he held conspicuously before him, stepped in front of the screen, and threw on the projector.

CHANDLER, bent over the papers at his desk, heard a soft step and looked up to find himself face to face with the black-robed, masked image that had so startled the council of three a little while before.

The President-elect leaped to his feet, his face showing amazement and anger, rather than fright.

"Who the devil are you, and how did you get in?"

"Quiet! Stand where you are! Don't press any call-buttons! If any one finds us together you'll die first, he next!" Fleckner rapped out. "Sit down over in that chair, out of reach of push-buttons."

Chandler obeyed, as any reasonable man would. But he still showed no sign of fear. He already had himself in hand and was eyeing the apparent intruder cooly.

"That's better," the apparition went on. "Don't be alarmed. You won't suffer the slightest harm if you are reasonable, as you will be, I'm sure, when I've shown you that your life and reputation are entirely in my hands.

"Now, as to your questions. To answer the second one first; I got in by a method I shall use often from now on, for it will be necessary for us to confer frequently.

"And who am I? Well, we don't name names as a rule, in our organization, do we? I'll just keep mine to myself, as you have kept yours till now. I am, however, a member of the secret organization of which you have been the head, a member who was not afraid to use his brains and inquire into things, instead of blindly taking orders.

"I have located you, for instance, and can expose you at will if I choose. I know the machinery of the organization from A to Z. I have in my possession a complete list of the members and records of every order you have issued for a year back. Where you have allowed a leak to break out in the system which nearly wrecked it, I have found the leak, stopped it, and altered the system so that you can no longer handle it and I can.

"In short, I am the new head of the organization and have come here tonight to announce my assumption of leadership and offer to retain you as my first lieutenant, provided you are amenable to reason."

My admiration for the poise of Chandler increased as I watched him while Fleckner pronounced this remarkable mixture of truth and fiction. There was not the slightest flicker of expression in his face as he replied.

"This is very interesting!" he said, with sneering emphasis. "Some secret fraternity, I suppose, and this is the rather original and startling method of installing a new officer. I fancy you had a little too much to drink and got in the wrong house. Otherwise, I haven't the remotest notion of what you are talking about. Now, just go out quietly the way you came, and we'll overlook it this time."

Fleckner's answer was to draw a packet of photographic prints from a pocket of his robe. His counterfeit image seemed to lay them on Chandler's table, at the same time keeping the automatic ready with the other hand. He picked up the prints one by one and held them before Chandler's face.

There was a photograph of Chandler in his telephone booth followed by a close-up of the mechanism of the secret circuit and a picture of the council of three in the private room at the Riccadona, Judge Tanner at the phone taking Chandler's orders. Several views of the underground clubroom followed.

There were photos of the robbing of the trust company, showing Chandler's part in it from start to finish. There were views of the counterfeiting plant under the cotton mill at Fall River, and others showing how the bogus money reached Chandler.

It was a pretty complete and unanswerable argument. Chandler's eyes widened a little as he watched the pictured story unfold. But otherwise he showed no signs of emotion.

"Now," Fleckner announced as he slipped the prints back in his pocket, "in addition to this I have phonograph records of the conversation that went with these photographs, so there isn't much evidence lacking. I have other photos, too, if you aren't satisfied yet.

"I must be brief and get away before I am interrupted," he went on, when Chandler made no sign. "In a nutshell, the situation is this: I have learned the system by which you held your power. That alone ends your usefulness as head of the organization. Further, certain outsiders began to get a clue to your system of communication with subordinates. You know that already. That renders that system useless. I've therefore been around and established a new system, which I know and you don't. I've explained to the leaders that the old is unsafe and

that they must acknowledge no more orders over it. So you are entirely cut off and helpless.

"Still further, I have built up my own secret inner circle of assistants within the organization and broken up yours, as you will learn if you try to give any more orders.

"Now, not a man but you and me know that the headship of the organization has changed. And they won't know. You will be surprised to learn, though, that one of your recent prisoners knew you by name for the head of the organization, and under torture told it."

For the first time Chandler showed signs of alarm.

"I thought that would startle you," Fleckner laughed. "Well, don't worry as long as you obey me. I have assured them the prisoner was crazy and altogether in error. Meantime I have put the fellow where he will do no harm unless I choose. But mark me. If you are rebellious, I have only to expose you and the old machinery you controlled, and go right on with the new one I have created. Will you act as assistant and obedient adviser to me, or face disgrace and residence at Ossining Farm?"

Chandler stood in thought for some moments. He was now controlling his emotions with evident effort.

"You have me," he admitted at last. "I yield. There's nothing else to do. What do you wish first?"

"There's only one thing to-night," said Fleckner, triumph in his voice. "And that is to complete the transfer of authority by turning over the custody of the secret treasure."

Chandler was studying him curiously as he said this. His own face had become a complete mask again.

"I noticed that you had no photo of the big treasure chest. I suspect that you, with all your knowledge, know no more about the treasure's hiding-place than I."

"What do you mean?" Fleckner demanded sharply.

"I mean that you've made the natural mistake of assuming that I was the ultimate man higher up. I was not. I was head of the working organization, it is true. But above me was the only man who knows the secret of the treasury. I haven't the remotest idea who he is or where he keeps the treasure."

CHAPTER XIX

A Reign of Terror

FOR long minutes after Chandler's almost catastrophic announcement that his overthrower had not yet reached his goal, Chandler and Fleckner's image faced each other in intense defiant silence.

It was a poker game with wealth and power immeasurable at stake, the spectacle of a Napoleon wagering with the devil his soul against the dominion of hell. But I defy any mortal man to have read in the mask of stone that was Chandler's face, whether he was risking his last vestige of power and self-respect on a royal flush or a pure bluff.

Fleckner, uncertain, wavered and lost.

"Very well," he said at length. "I'll let your statement go as it stands for the present. If it is true, you and I are equal now as far as the treasure goes. In the end I will conquer its secret and deal with its guardian as I have with you. At least he will receive no further tribute from the crime trust and wield no more power over that organization. If you have lied I will soon know it, and I will handle you without mercy."

He paused impressively.

"Do you wish to alter your statement in any way?" he added.

"Not in the least," Chandler responded colorlessly. "I have told you the truth. Make the most of it."

"Very well, then," Fleckner said finally. "We'll meet again soon. Good night."

Chandler made no reply. He stood silently watching the black mirage of Fleckner until it passed from his sight through the door into the hall and there vanished into the air. He made no attempt to follow it or to investigate how this supposedly material being had gained entrance.

Instead he sank into his chair, and for an hour sat, bowed head in his hands, his iron self-control abandoned once he believed himself without an audience. Finally he arose and staggered into his bedchamber, a man suddenly stricken with age.

Meantime Professor Fleckner was raging about the laboratory like a caged lion robbed of his meal. He seemed oblivious to our presence.

"Was the man lying? How can I prove it? Treasure of Tantalus indeed! Slipped away again! But I'll get it yet! Meantime they'll pay through the nose!" he muttered as he paced the floor.

I believe this final disappointment and his baffled rage was the ultimate blow that broke down the last inhibitions of his gradually warping moral nature. Even his normally powerful intellect seemed for a time unbalanced.

At any rate, Priestley and I were doomed to sit helplessly by and witness, at its evil source, the development and spread of a world-wide reign of terror—a period when no man felt safe against the public revelation of his most private words and acts or the contents of his most secret documents—when most carefully guarded money and securities were stolen, the thief betraying uncanny knowledge of the secret measures of protection. Family skeletons were rattled in the ears of wealth till large sums were despatched to mysterious sources to buy silence. Secret business pacts were laid bare, sending the stock market rocketing skyward or plunging to the depths. Political intrigues were unfolded for the benefit of rival parties. And all these infernal activities, Priestley and I knew, emanated from the mind of Professor Fleckner through the control-board of his miraculous telephonoscope.

In the mean time this evil wonder-worker was reported as being seen and interviewed in various sections of South America, through which continent he was believed to be making an airplane tour. The crafty professor thus maintained an alibi by projecting his image to one of those points every few days.

He no longer took us into his confidence. He made no objection to our watching his screen when we wished, but some of his most spectacular coups were performed while we slept. We followed them mainly through the sensational newspaper stories that appeared each morning. For the papers were

delivered through the tube regularly. Fleckner had taken care not to order these stopped when he made his pretense of closing his apartment and going abroad.

He must have worked the larceny squad of the crime trust overtime and have taken no pains to conceal the robberies by replacing the stolen money with counterfeit, as in the case of the theft we had witnessed in the trust company vaults. Hardly a morning passed in which the papers did not feature a series of widely scattered bank hauls.

A rival inventor of Fleckner's, Dr. Hayward Bernstorm, was manufacturing a superior quality of dye by a secret process which he had not entrusted to the patent office. Only the inventor knew the vital part of the ingredients, administering the final touches with his own hand to each batch of the product. The only written formula lay in a safe-deposit vault in one of New York's most substantial banks. Yet, suddenly, another chemical concern, in which I happened to know Fleckner was a large stockholder, began to manufacture the dye by the same process. The owner of the secret sued the bank for allowing access to the safety-deposit box by an unauthorized person.

But the secret formula was found intact and apparently undisturbed, and there was no valid evidence that any one but its owner had seen it. The suit was lost.

A man, prominent in New York social and financial circles, made a scurrilous and, as it turned out, mistaken statement about a business rival. It was made only to the maker's wife in strictest confidence in the privacy of their apartments. The next day he was sued for slander. The complainant stated in court that an unknown stranger had stepped up to him on the street and quoted the slanderous remark. Even the wife of the defendant, apparently voluntarily, though weeping and reluctant, appeared on the stand and corroborated the evidence against her husband.

She explained that she did so because she had received an anonymous letter threatening that if she refused, an unfortunate, but supposedly secret, incident in her own recent career would be exposed. No evidence, as to who this mysterious blackmailer was, appeared, of course, but Fleckner reminded us, as he chuckled over the newspaper account, that the defendant in the slander suit had once disputed in the papers a public statement of the professor's.

In similar fashion Fleckner vented his personal spleen in many directions. In other instances he seemed to have no personal interest other than the gratification of his whimsical humor or a display of power.

THUS when a serious dispute arose between the Shop Council of Employees and the management of the United States Airplane Company, each side held a series of secret conferences in its efforts to get the best of the other. That is why they tried to hold secret conferences. Unfortunately the papers each morning published detailed reports of the meetings of each side. As a result, each organization was ruptured by a wrangle in which every one accused every one else of breaking faith.

There was panic in the political world when, after each secret caucus of party leaders preparatory to organizing the coming Congress, the papers of the other parties published full reports of the proceedings.

And these mysterious revelations of secrets spread to international circles. The plottings of a circle of Berlin royalists, who aimed to restore the German monarchy, was revealed to the republican government just before the coup was to be sprung. On the other hand, the minutes of the executive sessions of the Council of the League of Nations suddenly began to be printed in full in the papers without any official sanction, and as a result, an effort to make certain delicate readjustments in the Far East in favor of Japan, had to be abandoned.

Such are only a few of thousands of incidents picked at random from the reign of terror that accompanied these mad attacks on the privacy of the world. Of course some good did spring out of this evil. Certain revelations of business and political chicanery resulted in making business men and politicians alike more straightforward in their dealings for a long time to come, when it finally dawned on the public that some mysterious spy system was rendering thick walls, distance, and darkness of no avail in the keeping of secrets.

A newspaper humorist revived the fable of the "Little Black Man" who went about prying and telling secrets. Presently it ceased to be a joke. The sophisticated were convinced that some clever blackmailing agency was at work. Those inclined to be superstitious became positively so. All shared in the panic. No man knew when his most secret act or word might not be publicly quoted to his detriment.

Men lost confidence in banks and in business enterprises as the secret drain into Professor Fleckner's coffers continued unchecked.

As this proceeded I continued to wonder vaguely why Priestley and I were no more actively indignant at what we witnessed; or why we were not earnestly plotting measures to thwart this new archvillain. Priestley shared my wonder in the same vague way, and we discussed it occasionally in half-hearted fashion. We seemed to sleep or doze heavily most of the time and to be in a semistupor even when awake.

ONE day, while we two were at luncheon together, Priestley accidentally upset his cup of coffee before he had tasted it. He wiped up the mess, and did not ask James, who waited on us, for another cup. That afternoon, instead of dozing about in his chair as usual, and as I did, he was wide awake.

He walked restlessly about and chaffed me for my drowsiness. Late in the afternoon he paused in front of my chair as I roused myself from one of my frequent naps, and declared that he'd give a good part of the Treasure of Tantalus for the cup of coffee he had spilled at noon.

"I never realized what a slave I had become to that drink!" he complained.

I showed no interest in his habits. Suddenly his face lighted. He shook me by the shoulders.

"Wake up and listen!" he exclaimed. "I've got it now. They've put drugs in our coffee right along to keep us doped and tractable!"

And that proved to be the truth. After that we emptied our coffee cups in our wash-bowls when our attendant was out of the room. And straightway

our chronic drowsiness and lack of moral sensitiveness vanished. We took good care to conceal this change from Fleckner and to watch his manipulations of the revised crime trust machinery with renewed interest.

The professor had now wearied of bank robberies and was using the crime trust agents as collectors in a continuous series of blackmailing enterprises. With his malicious rays he followed the sun around the globe, keeping all the civilized world in constant terror.

In addition, he was steadily widening the influence of his agents in the big business corporations of the world by crafty use of his knowledge of inside history. He alternated this with busy schemes for promoting liberal legislation in the parliaments of the world and in the Council of the League of Nations. He was wielding a power such as Chandler in his wildest moments never dreamed of.

As for the President-elect of our country, he was destined for some time to hold no more conferences with the black-robed phantom that had usurped his place. That first visitation had been too much for him. Chandler took to his bed next day with a severe attack of nervous prostration and eventually was declared physically impotent to assume the office to which he had been elected. Hence, on March 4, Vice-President Horace Kildare was inaugurated in his place.

This turn of events irritated Fleckner the more. He intended wresting from Chandler the details of how he turned the loot of the trust over to the real custodian of the treasure, and from that starting-point he would trace down its hiding-place and its keeper. For in the midst of all his multifarious activities Fleckner never lost sight of his chief object, to get his clutches upon that enormous accumulation of years of successful plunder.

One evening, shortly after inauguration, when Priestley and I were alone in my room and had made certain that the professor was busy manipulating society, Priestley confided to me that he had at last deciphered the new combination of the telephonoscope at work, by cautiously watching Fleckner at work.

"I'll get a chance some day before long to use it," he said. "I'm going to end all this. I'll connect with the district attorney and tell our story. What if I do sacrifice myself and my fortune? This can't go on."

Far into the night we discussed plans for carrying out this scheme. The main difficulty was to get at the telephonoscope without being blocked by Fleckner or one of his two men.

The chance came by mere accident a week later. James, who had the watch at the time, had brought in the dinner trays for all four of us. Something proved to be missing, and he returned to the kitchen for it. Fleckner at the moment was bent over his notes with his back to us. Priestley, acting on sudden inspiration, reached over and quietly changed our coffee cups around. That evening Fleckner and James drank the drugged coffee. Half an hour later the worthy pair were asleep in their chairs.

At length Priestley, after testing the soundness of their slumbers, went triumphantly to the control board of the telephonoscope, successfully worked the combination, and a moment later the screen glowed with the ray in full action. Then he seized the directing lever and turned the ray in the direction of the home of the district attorney.

"Now for the end of the crime trust!" he whispered excitedly.

CHAPTER XX

The Voice From Nowhere

THE district attorney of New York County lived in a handsome apartment in upper Riverside Drive. The brilliant lights of that thoroughfare flashed across the screen as Priestley ran his ray along the higher house numbers until he came to the one he sought. Then, just inside, he projected his own image and advanced it across the big tapestried hall to the desk, and announced that Mr. Thomas Priestley wished to see the district attorney.

The hall attendant got the sensation of his life. He was a reader of the newspapers. To have an indicted criminal of prominence, who had effected an escape that had been a sensation for weeks, calmly walk in for a social call on the prosecutor, after all hope of catching him had been abandoned, was too much. The young man stared at Priestley incredulously for a moment, then gathered his wits, and in a frightened voice announced the visitor through the phone. After an awe-struck moment, he reported to Priestley that the district attorney was in and would see him.

"Eighteth floor, apartment twenty——" he began; but his voice was drowned as far as we were concerned by a sudden whirring roar. The screen went blank, save for a pale yellow glow that showed the ray was still on but that it was registering no images.

The roar penetrated even Fleckner's drugged consciousness, and he awoke with a start.

"What's this? What's this?" he demanded, jumping up. "What are you boys doing?"

"The machine seems to have run wild. We were trying to stop it," I hastily lied.

"The combination has been tampered with! Who did that?" Fleckner demanded, leaping for the control-board.

"You must have left it on when you went to sleep. I found it that way when I heard the roar and came out of my room," Priestley ventured, ably seconding my mendacious efforts.

But now Fleckner was struggling with the levers and for the time paid no attention to us. He confidently threw off the power switch and examined the intricate network of wires. He seemed to find no trouble. Then he threw on the power again, and the roaring was renewed. Again the screen glowed pale yellow. He tried manipulating the ray, but got no results. Nothing appeared on the screen, and the roaring continued.

Again he studied every detail of his mechanism, wiring, control-board, power-cables, and transformers.

"I can only guess that some big terrestrial electric disturbance has interfered with the ray and has put it temporarily out of control," he ventured at length. "A most interesting phenomenon!"

He sat up the rest of the night making various tests and setting down extensive notes on the phenomenon, which I confess interested Priestley and me but little. We were too disgruntled at the loss of our opportunity to communicate with the outside world.

I wondered grimly how long the district attorney stood waiting eagerly to greet the man he had sought all over the world, and what happened to the nervous system of the hall attendant when he saw that amazing hero melt into the thinnest air before his eyes.

But just before daybreak, our interest in the vagaries of the telephonoscope suddenly awakened. For some time that roar as of the tumult of many waters had been slowly dying down, first a cataract, then a rill, then the low drone of distant rain, and finally the faint sighing of a summer breeze, followed by silence.

As the sound faded, the light on the screen grew gradually in strength till it was a bright glow. For a moment it became an intense white light, then slowly dimmed till it resembled the last faint flush of a sunset afterglow.

Fleckner had for the moment given up his investigation, at a loss what to do next. We sat, all four of us, staring curiously at the screen which, after doing our bidding so long, had suddenly turned rebel. Then into the hushed stillness of the room there came from the screen the sound of a human voice, a soft, girlish voice of ineffable sweetness singing an eery, haunting melody.

For long moments we sat breathless, enchanted. The song rose and fell, now near, now distant, like music borne over wide waters on a fitful breeze. It haunts me yet, after all these years.

I make no attempt to reproduce it here. None of us were musically trained. We kept a phonographic record of it, but musical composers who have since listened to that record found that the melody did not conform to conventional scales, and it defied their efforts to record it on paper and reproduce it from notes with anything approximating the original effect. The words, too, though pronounced slowly and with beautifully clear enunciation, meant nothing to us, and their syllables defied all attempts to record them by any alphabetical symbols with which we were familiar.

BUT meantime our efforts were bent on trying to locate the strange singer. In this Priestley and I took a lively interest. On our part it was in a measure idle curiosity, and relief at this welcome change from the sordid drama we had been witnessing, an anodyne to our disappointment at not being able to communicate with the outside world. But more particularly, we were enthralled by that voice and consumed with desire to see the singer.

And yet, mingled with that desire, I was conscious of a certain dread of the revelation. I do not know if it be possible for a man to fall genuinely in love with a woman from having merely heard her voice. I have never made a study of the amorous psychology of the blind. But I do know that the voice of this strange woman moved me deeply and I dreaded seeing her face lest it destroy the illusion.

Priestley and I exchanged no confessions on this score, but I noted, with a foolish feeling almost akin to jealousy, that his manner indicated a feeling even stronger than mine.

I thought suddenly of Miss Stimson and became perversely indignant at him. I have admitted that my momentary glimpse of the violet eyes of that young woman had intrigued my susceptible and rather fickle heart. My admiration for her subsequent conduct had deepened the sentiment dangerously. I had tried to stifle it, however, convinced that her heart was pledged to unrequited affection for Priestley. I had believed that he held for her no feeling but a kind of impersonal gratitude for saving his life. His ready interest in the voice of this unknown young woman made me sure of it. And, as I say, I was unreasonably indignant.

But while we youngsters were thus mooning about the room, Fleckner, forgetting for a moment all sordid and utilitarian considerations, was lost in a problem of pure science.

This pet invention of his, of whose every whim he had supposed himself master, had suddenly displayed a new trait. He must learn its secret.

The dominion of the world and the Treasure of Tantalus could wait. Once more, for the moment, the master criminal was the calm, cold devotee of the intellect.

The song ceased a few minutes after we first heard it, but the light stayed on the screen, showing that the ray was still active. And it seemed to remain focused on one region, for at intervals throughout the day we heard the song again, now far and now near, but always the same words. Once when the song came from a point so close to the foreground of the ray focus that it seemed the singer must be in the room itself just behind the screen, the singer stopped abruptly in the midst of the refrain. Then, in a melodious speaking voice, she pronounced a few rapid words. She was answered by a heavy, though not unpleasant masculine tone. A lively dialogue followed for a few minutes, then silence again.

"It's most baffling," Fleckner admitted. "I pride myself on my knowledge of languages, but I catch no syllable that seems to bear any relation to the European family of tongues."

"Means nothing to me, either," Priestley declared. "I've picked up, in my travels, a smattering of various dialects among the American Indians, the African and Mongolian tribes, but I catch no familiar sound. Of course, my knowledge covers only a minute fraction of the known dialects."

"You can prove nothing by me," I declared. "English, French, and Spanish sum me up."

James, the muscular, contributed nothing but stolid silence. The drugged coffee was still troubling him a little. Anyhow, acts and not words were his specialty.

"As for trying to locate this thing by any known electrical test," Fleckner went on, "I'm completely stumped. I don't want to take the machine to pieces, for fear of losing the connection for good, and I want to locate that language as a matter of curiosity. My range and distance indicators register nothing at all. I can't understand it. I'm simply going to watch developments for a while. Perhaps something will appear on the screen that will give us a clue."

And late that evening, just as we were about to give up and retire for the night, his patience was rewarded. Priestley and I had already gone to our rooms when Fleckner, who had taken one last look at the screen before settling back in his chair for a nap, suddenly shouted out excitedly:

"Something's happening! Come out here!"

We ran out and looked at the screen, which a moment before had been showing only a faint greenish yellow. It now glowed with a clear white light,

excepting for faint shadings here and there which presently began to take definite form. In a few moments more the slowly developing screen showed the interior of a big open room.

We seemed to be looking down the broad aisle of a warehouse. On the right of the aisle was a row of bins full of something that looked like coarse gravel. On the left was piled high a long tier of slabs, apparently some sort of building material, shaped something like old-fashioned bricks, only larger. We saw it all dimly as through a thin haze.

We studied this picture curiously, trying in vain to determine in what obscure corner of the world it might be. Suddenly the misty obscuration of our vision cleared and we saw it all plainly. The contents of the nearest bin and the end of the long tiers of bricks stood out in bold relief. A moment we gazed at it wonderingly. Then Fleckner jumped to his feet and shouted:

"The Treasure of Tantalus at last!"

The supposed gravel pebbles were precious stones, millions on millions of them glittering and shimmering with fairy light! The bricks were of solid gold!

CHAPTER XXI

The Singer Revealed

THERE could be no doubt of it. By this strange, fortuitous accident we had been permitted to peer in to a treasure-house stored with fabulous wealth. Fleckner verified our first judgment of the material in the bins and bricks by applying the new reflective spectrum test which he had invented. Not only were the supplies of these most precious materials in the big storehouse, but we discovered that the building itself was made of bricks and slabs and girders of gold. The floor was a priceless concrete of jewels bedded in golden cement.

Here indeed, it seemed, was moral defectiveness developed into madness! Chandler, or the alleged man above him who received the crime trust's treasure, had apparently converted the vast stores of the organization's stolen wealth into this fantastic, materialized dream of grandeur rivaling the ancient conception of a golden hereafter.

But where was this trove? Of its location we were as ignorant as ever. It was more than before, our Treasure of Tantalus, lying in plain sight, but as much as ever out of our reach.

It had ceased to be an academic problem with Professor Fleckner. Gone was the calm concentration of the scientist and man of pure intellect. In his place was again the feverish, avaricious searcher for hidden riches.

Back and forth across the laboratory he paced, never taking his eyes from the maddening picture of the gleaming treasure and cudgeling his brain in vain for some method he had not yet tried for determining where the end of our magic ray rested. So the night wore away. Priestley and I dozed at intervals in our chairs. Morning came and we ate breakfast in moody silence. The mystery was beginning to bore us.

Then suddenly there broke again that eery song.

"If we could only determine the language or dialect she's singing, we might locate the general quarter of the globe in which your treasure lies," Priestley ventured. "Pity we don't dare invite in some language experts to identify it."

Fleckner stopped short and clapped his hands together in glee.

"An idea!" he exclaimed. "Good for you, Priestley! We can't bring the experts to us, but we can take our mysterious song to them."

Priestley and I looked at each other in alarm. During all the reign of terror he had inspired, Fleckner had never been so presumptuous as to appear outside his apartment or to abandon for a moment the pretense that he was traveling in South America. Secure as was his secret hold on the crime trust and through it upon the machinery of the law, it was still entirely possible that some person or persons unknown to us might connect him with Priestley, and the general public was still clamoring for the capture of Priestley and the twenty-million-dollar fortune he was believed to have fraudulently diverted from the public treasury. Fleckner once caught and held as a witness in the Priestley case would have a hard job concealing any longer the secret of his telephonoscope and the universal havoc he had wrought with it.

Now he was mad enough to propose calmly going forth and exposing to various outsiders, one of the results of the use of that instrument.

BUT the old man was not mad enough to fail to notice our alarm. I think in his preoccupation with the pranks of his invention he had not realized until now that his prisoner-guests were no longer in the drugged stupor in which he had been keeping them.

He looked sharply from one to the other of us, but naturally made no comment on our renewed mental acuteness. I wondered uneasily if he would suspect the tampering with the coffee, and shift the drug to some other article of our diet, perhaps in larger and more effective doses. I resolved at the first opportunity to warn Priestley that we must eat sparingly of everything set before us.

At any rate, he set our minds at rest as to his next move.

"I'm not going to expose us to any danger," he explained. "Remember I'm still supposed to be traveling in the Andes, and it will be perfectly plausible that I should use a long-distance telephone from there. Just watch me work and see how simple and safe it is."

While he was talking he must have pressed the secret switch connecting up the apartment telephone, for he now punched up a number on the call-board of his desk phone.

"May I speak with Dr. Bonstelle?" he asked after a moment.

I recognized the name of the head of the Language Department of Columbia University, a world-famous philologist.

"Dr. Bonstelle?" Fleckner continued in a moment. "This is Professor Rufus Fleckner. You may have noticed by the papers up North that I'm taking a vacation tour in the Andes Mountains. I'm calling now from the City of Santa Brazos in northern Chile. I've struck a curious phenomenon in your line and wanted to get your opinion on it. I would like to follow it up before I leave the region so I am venturing to consult you by long-distance phone. A

group of wandering minstrels, apparently a gipsy tribe, came down from the mountains yesterday and gave a musical in the Plaza here. They sang for the most part in the Zingaro, or Spanish gipsy dialect. But one young woman sang a little thing in an utterly different tongue. Neither I nor any of the natives I interviewed—including Indians of several different tribes—who were about the Plaza, could find any resemblance in it to any familiar tongue. I tried interviewing the gipsies, but got only suspicious shrugs. They wouldn't let me get to the girl herself. I made a phonographic record of the song and would like to transmit it to you if you'll put a phonograph in front of your receiver. You can let the different men in your department have a try at it in case it isn't at once familiar to you."

Apparently Dr. Bonstelle swallowed the story and readily consented to the request, for Fleckner brought out the song record, put it in a machine, and placed it in front of his phone transmitter. Again I was forced to admire the consummate skill of the old liar.

"Just a moment, Professor Fleckner," I said, placing a cautious hand over our transmitter. "Why not try him with the spoken dialogue, too? That might be easier to read than the words of the song."

He looked at me pityingly.

"Bright idea!" he sneered. "It would be quite a help in case they recognize this language, and the conversation of our mysterious pair happened to give away the story of the treasure!"

He pushed me away from the phone and I subsided abashed.

But Dr. Bonstelle, after listening to the song and taking a record of it, declared himself as much in the dark as we. He recognized not a trace of resemblance to any of the general families of languages. He agreed, however, to have the men of his department try it out. Professor Fleckner arranged to call him up in twenty-four hours and get his report.

Soon after Fleckner had completed these arrangements, there were further developments on the screen. The picture began to sway back and forth, revealing different sections of the golden warehouse, to grow dim and bright by spells.

The professor became nervous at this.

"I hope we aren't going to lose it now just as there's a chance of solving the riddle. That's the exasperating part of being unable to control the instrument. I've proved this much, though. A terrestrial current of electricity of tremendous power has been set up by some seismic disturbance. Our rays have been caught and held by it. They aren't powerful enough to break away or be directed independently. We'll just have to let this current play with them until I can increase the power of the generators enough to offset the big current."

He spent the greater part of the day equipping some additional generator units out of odds and ends of spare parts in his storeroom. He was nearly ready to connect in these new units when something else happened on the screen.

The swaying of the picture had been growing more violent at intervals as the day passed. Suddenly it shifted abruptly to the right. The interior of the big building slid off the screen and left us gasping in unbelieving amazement at what took its place.

We seemed to be gazing down the length of a broad, deep cañon. Down its center flowed a winding stream, along the margin of which rested curious, one-story houses, flat-roofed and rambling. Towering, rugged walls arose on either side of the cañon. Deep-cut, irregular ravines branched off in various directions. There was a little curious, stunted vegetation here and there of unfamiliar varieties, but the swaying of the picture prevented our examining it closely.

The overwhelming wonder of the place, however, was this: Not merely all the houses in sight were built of the same precious materials as the big warehouse we first saw; the ground of the great valley also was of glittering soil strewn with boulders of gold and emerald and diamonds and other precious minerals in sizes such as no man had ever before dreamed outside the pages of fable or the vision of the Apocalypse. The great precipices were of solid gold, streaked with veins of silver and studded with gems. The river flowed over golden sands and sparkling pebble gems.

The Treasure of Tantalus indeed!

But now the ray shifted again, and on the screen's foreground lay a little dell at the mouth of a ravine that opened on the shining sands of the river-shore. There a little pocket of ordinary soil had washed down and the dell was screened with dwarf trees and carpeted with moss and curious grasses. All the foliage was of pale greenish-yellow, as though its golden habitat had permeated its veins.

This scene became steady for a moment, and as we drank in its details the now familiar song burst again on our ears.

An instant later the shrubbery parted and the singer herself stepped forth.

CHAPTER XXII

The Lady of Tantalus

I THINK even our case-hardened old jailer-scientist, Fleckner, forgot his sordid aims for a moment, as we saw before us, for the first time, the materialization of the golden voice whose haunting melody had so enchanted us. I knew from the gasping sigh that escaped Priestley, that he was at least as hard hit as I. Even the ultra-phlegmatic John, Fleckner's second man, whose turn at watch it was, let go a deep-chested bit of blasphemy, so inflected, however, that it expressed the greatest measure of awed admiration of which his nature was capable.

My fear that the singer, once faced, would fall below the promise of her voice, had been utterly groundless. It was as though one of Raphael's angels had suddenly stepped forth from the canvas palpitant with life—a figure of slenderest grace draped in a robe of shimmering cloth of gold. A cataract of golden hair flowed well below her golden, gem-studded girdle, unbound except for a finely engraved circlet of gold about her exquisitely modeled head. The perfect oval of her face was as if carved from old ivory excepting for the thin, ruby line of her delicate mouth and eyes blue as the sapphires in her girdle.

But why should a fatuous old man bore his readers with a feeble attempt to paint a word-picture of a face that enthralled him for a moment a half-century ago? Enough that my enthralment, complete as it was, lasted only a moment. For I suddenly found myself contrasting this idealization of womankind with the intensely human face of little Miss Stimson, into whose eyes of violet I had been permitted to gaze so briefly once. My enthralment with the vision passed, leaving behind it only a feeling of satisfaction over my sense of feminine beauty. Tom Priestley would have been saved some bitter hours if he had experienced the same change.

But Professor Fleckner was wasting no time over mere admiration of a glorious face. He was busily adjusting his cinema machine and phonograph attachment to catch every move and word of the girl.

Meanwhile she stood by the river-brink gazing abstractedly into the gleaming water and softly humming over again the familiar song.

Suddenly she stopped singing and with a little exclamation of delight knelt swiftly and darted a slender hand into the water's edge. She drew out a small, irregular pebble, rusty black in color and, still kneeling, gazed at it raptly, with frequent repetitions of her little cry of delight.

What this precious find could be we were unable to guess from the fleeting glimpse we got. She was now holding it close in her cupped hand out of our range of vision.

She was so preoccupied that she failed to hear steps on the jewel-pebbled beach. Around a clump of shrubbery a man appeared. He was a tall, well-shaped figure clad in a simple tunic, skin-tight trousers and sandals, all of the same golden fabric as the girl's garments. His hair was a shade darker than hers and fell uncut to his shoulders. He wore likewise a long, untrimmed, yellow beard.

The cut of his features suggested a relationship to the girl which his age and subsequent attitude toward her clearly indicated to be that of father. But the blue eyes of the father were cold steel, the girl's glowed with the warmth of a summer sky. Avarice was the keynote of his expression. There was the same calculating gleam in his eyes that I had noted so often in the pale orbs of Professor Fleckner.

He stood for a moment regarding the kneeling figure curiously. Then he crept stealthily forward and peered over her shoulder. At sight of what she held in her hand he uttered a harsh cry and seized her by the arm.

She leaped to her feet and faced him with wide, startled eyes, shrinking back and clutching her bauble to her bosom.

The father held out his right hand commandingly and held her arm roughly with his left, speaking a volley of harsh syllables.

A moment the girl hesitated and then reluctantly handed over what she held. The man held it up to his face and, with a grunt of satisfaction, thrust it in his tunic and strode away. The girl, as soon as he was out of sight, threw herself on the ground and shook with sobs.

All this time we had caught only a fleeting glimpse of the object that had caused two people so much agitation.

The girl was gradually getting her grief under control when again a step sounded on the bank above her. The bushes parted and a young man about her own age stepped out. He was as perfect a specimen of masculine beauty as she was of the feminine. He was dressed in the same general style as her father. His complexion also was fair and his face shone with the idealism of healthy young manhood.

He caught sight of the girl and ran toward her with a cry of solicitude, arms outstretched. She scrambled to her feet in confusion and shrank back blushing, but evidently not displeased at seeing him.

He seemed to ask her numerous questions, to which she replied in monosyllables. At length she led him to the edge of the stream and, pointing to the spot where she had picked up the bauble, broke into voluble speech. She was evidently telling the story of her find and of her father's action.

The young man knelt down eagerly and began digging furiously in the shimmering sand. Suddenly there was a call from the bank above in the harsh voice of the girl's father.

The girl started guiltily, spoke a low word to the youth and, with an answering call to her father, ran swiftly up the bank. The young man arose and looked after the girl for a moment with an expression of mixed affection and anger. Then he walked down the river shore and disappeared.

Though the little dell remained fixed on the screen for some time after that, there were no more signs of life manifested, and it finally faded to a barely perceptible outline.

Fleckner took advantage of this interlude to turn back to the building up of a higher power ray and as he worked, we debated the meaning of the scene we had witnessed.

For my part I had become convinced that Professor Fleckner was wide of the mark in believing his errant rays had hit by accident on the crime trust's treasure trove which we had hunted so long in vain.

"If we had found nothing more than the warehouse full of treasure that we first sighted I would believe you might be right," I admitted. "But when I saw an entire grand cañon made of solid gold and jewels, I knew at once the crime trust could never have stolen enough wealth for that even if their chief were fantastically crazy enough to convert the bulk of it into such unusable forms as mountains. Moreover, there is no section of this part of the world where such a huge freak could be hidden. It must be in some remote and comparatively unexplored region of the South Polar continent made habitable by escaping volcanic vapors. There is apparently concentrated a great natural deposit of gold and rare minerals."

"I think you are partly right and partly wrong." Fleckner countered. "I agree with you on the probable remoteness of this region. I also agree with you in saying that the mountains and soil we saw are a natural phenomenon. But remoteness is no bar to a man in an airplane. I think now Chandler told the truth when he said he turned the treasure over to a man still higher up and that the older man we saw on the screen, father of the singing girl, is that man. I believe he discovered a remote tribe of attractive barbarians in this golden valley while searching for a place to keep his treasure. There he lives part of his time surrounded by wealth beyond his dreams

and adds to it the stolen millions of the trust. He's not normal of course. But you note that a great mass of gold was in bar form and the diamonds and other jewels were stored in bins. Either that is some of the wealth he has brought in or it is some ready to be taken out and used in the outer world. Think of the power such wealth gives. We must find and control it."

"Yes," Priestley agreed, to my surprise. "We must find it as soon as possible. It's time, Professor Fleckner, to call up Dr. Bonstelle again and see if they have located that language yet. There must be no delay in tracing out this region."

He seemed suddenly to be as greedily obsessed with the idea of the treasure as was Fleckner himself.

Fleckner agreed to this suggestion and got Bonstelle on the telephone. They had a long conference, mostly monosyllabic on Fleckner's side, from which I gathered that the head of Columbia's language department could give us no aid.

"Neither he nor any one in his department can make anything out of it," the professor reported after he had hung up. "He gave me a long discourse on the history and philosophy of language. The only significance in what he said was that certain fundamental sounds in the song could not possibly be reproduced by any normal, human-speaking apparatus. The mystery seems deeper than ever."

Fleckner turned back to his generators, and Priestley, after standing for a moment in unseeing abstraction, went to his room.

I sat for a few moments moodily ruminating on the strangeness of Priestley's attitude. Then, obeying a sudden impulse, I stepped over to his door. It stood slightly ajar. I had no intention to eavesdrop. I started to knock, but at that moment I heard his voice within. He was pacing the floor and talking to himself.

"My little Treasure of Tantalus," he murmured. "Poor little girl! I must find her! I must find her and save her from that golden hell!"

CHAPTER XXIII

A Scrap of Strange History

IT was not until the middle of the next forenoon that Fleckner completed the assembling of his additional generator units and was ready to try them in the hope that he would be able now to overcome in a measure the influence of the master current and have a little better control of the screen picture of this mysterious Valley of Tantalus.

Meantime we had continued to catch vague glimpses of it at intervals, but no more that were as steady and clear as that scene by the river shore. Nor did we hear the strange song again, though we caught occasional scraps of conversation.

Priestley roamed about in impatient restlessness, every few minutes urging Fleckner to hurry his work. For my part the novelty of the thing had worn off and I found my thoughts straying elsewhere. I was wondering about the comfort of little Miss Stimson, hidden away in solitary confinement somewhere in the big building. I resolved to speak a word for her when at length Fleckner had completed his reconstruction job and sat down for a minute to rest before trying it out.

"Don't you think, professor," I ventured, "that you're being a little unfair to Miss Stimson? She's missing a most interesting spectacle. She was in on all the forepart of our experiments and naturally has great curiosity as to what is going on now. What harm could she do in here, as long as she has no communication with the outside?"

"There's something in what you say," the old man agreed. "Besides she has a keen mind, as we've discovered and might be able to help us with suggestions. But it won't be necessary to have her in here. There is a small portable telephonoscope equipment in the storeroom, one of my early experiments. I'll have John set it up in her room. She'll be able then to watch in on our screen. I'll give her the cinema films of what she's missed, too, so she can bring the story up to date."

He called John and gave the order and assured me presently that the young lady was now enjoying the same privileges of outlook as we were.

The test of the additional ray units met with considerable success. When Fleckner switched them on, the picture on the screen which a moment before had been an indistinguishable blur, suddenly leaped into clear relief. We were looking once more down the broad aisle of the big treasure warehouse. On one side, as before, we saw the bins full of gems, on the other the long piles of golden bricks. But now, instead of being silent and lifeless, the scene was one of the busiest human activity.

Groups of short, thick-set men, clad only in breech-cloths of gold net, were hard at work moving the treasure. These men were in sharp contrast to the handsome specimens of manhood we had already seen, not merely in the shape of their bodies and the lower intelligence of their countenances; their skins were of a ghastly greenish hue.

There were several gangs of these repulsive creatures at work about the warehouse. In charge of each gang was one of the evidently superior race we had first seen, ivory white of skin, alert and intelligent.

Professor Fleckner found that the increase in the power of his rays enabled him to manipulate them with a fair degree of control within certain limits. He was able to move the focus about pretty much at will now, shifting various sections of the golden valley on his screen. But he was still unable to do any of his former close work, to control close-ups or look beneath surfaces. The projector refused absolutely to respond. He tried to throw one of our images into a lonely spot in the valley, to see if it could be done, but got no results.

But with the power we had, we were able to learn much. Our interest centered on the scene of activity in and around the big warehouse. Professor Fleckner was positive that some of the treasure was now about to be transported to the outer world and that he would be able to follow it with his reinforced rays and at last learn the location of the valley.

Some of the green-hued men were hitched like draft animals to low, rude trucks, made, like everything else we had seen so far, of solid gold. The workers were piling golden bricks into some of these and were shoveling precious stones into others.

With all my constitutional indifference to wealth, it gave me a curious sensation to see those trucks piled high with uncountable riches, as though they were so much gravel or clay bricks. The contents

of any one of the trucks would have made me a rich man for life.

Eagerly Fleckner followed with his ray the first of the trucks to leave the warehouse. It went out a winding gold-paved road along the river shore, past many houses of gold, to a spot where a square excavation had been dug. Here beside piles of similar material, the trucks were dumped. Masons were laying the cellar foundations of a house with these bricks, mixing the gems with cement and preparing a concrete to make the cellar bottom.

Again Fleckner's hopes were dashed. It was gradually dawning on him and the rest of us that here was a land where gold and jewels took the place of earth and rock and had no value except as ordinary building materials.

So with a snort of disappointment, the professor turned his rays back to the warehouse.

"For the present," he said, "I think we'd better study these people and get some clue to the meaning of their tongue. When we can understand their speech, we can learn something of what all this means. I still think, Blair, that I've located the real master of the crime trust, a defective with a fantastic, Oriental type of mind, who has carried out here on earth, his dream of a heaven of golden splendor."

We were able, quite clearly, to catch the scraps of conversation that went on in the foreground of our warehouse picture, so we sat down to a steady period of linguistic study, keeping, as usual, cinema and phonographic records of all that occurred and returning to our old system of taking turns at watch.

Miss Stimson now took an active part in our study, flashing occasional suggestions from her screen in the other apartment to ours in the laboratory.

We learned another curious fact about this Golden Valley of Tantalus. There seemed to be no day or night there, only a steady, unbroken glow of soft light. The men in the warehouse worked for a period roughly corresponding to our day and then rested for a like period.

"That tends to confirm your guess that this valley might be somewhere within the South Polar Circle," Fleckner said to me. "It is now daylight for six months there. This seems to be our first real clue to location."

The weeks that followed were monotonous enough, excepting for the occasional discovery of the meaning of a word. Each new word caught by associating it with some object or with an act of the speaker became an event to be looked forward to eagerly. It became a game with us, each trying with the rest to see who could locate the greatest number of new words.

GREAT was our triumph one day, when by contribution to the translation, we were able to catch the general drift of a conversation between two of the foremen, who sat on a pile of bricks in the foreground and talked earnestly for over an hour after the laborers had stopped work. We had seen these two in conference many times before.

We took advantage of the laborers' sleeping period that day to go back over all our phonographic records of speech and make translations.

Patching all our scraps together, we made out a connected story of absorbing interest. It seemed that one of the two foremen was a new man in the valley. He had recently wandered in by accident through the "Great Ravine" from "Beyond." His companion in their conferences was telling him the history of the valley and instructing him in its ways.

The story we gleaned hinged about a mysterious "treasure" which the people of this valley possessed. In this strange land where gold and precious jewels were common as the dirt under the feet of us ordinary earthlings, there was an article so precious that men lived for it, slaved for it, committed crimes and died for it. What such a "treasure" could be was beyond our power of imagination.

For many ages the green men lived happily in this valley in savage simplicity, wearing no clothing and dwelling in caves, or rough huts of gold. Never having heard of the "treasure," they were happy and never fought among themselves, for each had all he desired, and sought nothing from his neighbor.

Then down through the "Great Ravine" from the "Beyond" came and settled among them the men of ivory skins, straight, tall, and beautiful to look upon. And they dressed in robes of spun gold and had implements and dishes of gold and tools with which to fashion them. They had also, each man, some more and some less, a portion of the treasure, which being new and very rare, the green men looked upon eagerly and coveted.

Then said the ivory-skinned ones to the green-hued men of simpler minds, if you will work for us and build us houses of gold fashioned as we shall show you, we will give you bits of our treasure.

And so the green men worked for these new masters and were paid in bits of treasure, but being stupid men could build these houses only as the masters watched and directed their labors.

And when the green men saw how comfortable were the houses of gold, they asked the masters to direct them while they built houses for themselves. This the masters agreed to do if they would pay them back in the treasure they had given them. And so they did.

Then when the green men did more work for the masters, the masters paid them with leaves of worthless gold that were promises to give them treasure later on. "Meantime," said the masters, "we are keeping the treasure hidden and safe, but these leaves of gold will mean that you hold a share in it. Now there is more of the treasure out in the ravines. We will show you how to find and dig it up and let you keep half of it."

So the green men found a little treasure and kept half of it until they saw how useful were the masters' tools and dishes and how beautiful was their clothing. Then the masters sold them these things for the treasure the green men still had, but they paid the green men for the work they did only in the gold-leaf promises to pay treasure.

So the green men continued to work more and more for the masters in hope of some day getting back some of the treasure and they fought and stole among themselves for the little treasure that was left among them. But they never dared fight the masters because they were too cunning and powerful.

Then there had come down from the Great Ravine, Madga the Great, with his beautiful daughter, Olanda, who was then only a baby.

And Madga was more cunning yet than the other masters and he had with him more treasure than

any of them. The other masters all sought his favor and he traded among them till he had most of their treasure also. And so he came to rule over them and also over the green men.

And now that Olanda, the beautiful daughter of Madga, had grown up, many of the young masters desired her for a mate. But her cruel and covetous father had decreed that he should have her who first brought him one full measure of treasure.

Such was the story we gathered from our fragmentary records and I tried to set it down as nearly as possible in the simple speech of the narrator.

Looking back to the record of the little scene by the river between Olanda and her father, Madga, and the young man whose name we now knew was Grudga, we were able to interpret that Grudga was one of Olanda's suitors and apparently the one she favored most. She had found a bit of the mysterious treasure and her father had snatched it from her.

Here Miss Stimson broke in from her screen in the other apartment:

"None of you has translated the song yet," she said triumphantly. "I've just worked it out. Would you like to hear it?"

"By all means!" Priestley exclaimed eagerly.

These are the words she chanted in a surprisingly close rendering of the original melody and a voice which for me, I confess, held more charm than that of the singer of Tantalus:

I am the Treasure of the Valley
Where my proud sire rules in glory,
Many there are who seek me,
One there is who shall find me.
He who is worthy to hold me
Must bring of his lesser treasure
And pay it fully and freely
In proof that his heart is single,
For I am the Treasure of the Valley
Where my proud sire rules in glory.

CHAPTER XXIV

Beneath Our Feet

WHEN the girl finished this rendition of her rival's vainglorious song, I glanced at Priestley out of the corner of my eyes to see how he had taken it. He looked a little crestfallen. I was conscious of an unreasoning feeling of jealousy at the thought that the singer of the translation might have put some of her own feeling toward my friend Priestley into her voice. Mingled with my jealousy was a little inconsistent indignation that he did not reciprocate her feelings, but was lavishing his emotions futilely on this unknown, barbaric beauty.

"I am sick of the very sight and sound of treasure!" was his final petulant comment on the song. "It seems quite essential, though, even in affairs of the heart. Come! We're wasting time. Have you any more inspirations, Professor Fleckner, for locating this mysterious place?"

Professor Fleckner eyed him shrewdly and chuckled. I think that he realized for the first time that our romantic coworker was madly in love with the mysterious Lady of Tantalus.

"Priestley," he laughed, "for a young man who scorns treasure so much, I must say you show an amazing impatience to get at it. I suppose what you're after is to find out the nature of the mysterious stuff these fellows in the valley have been making so much fuss over and grab off 'one full measure' of it ahead of the other young bucks in the list. It beats me, though, what that stuff can be—that is so much more valuable than gold and jewels that they use the latter for building materials.

"However, I haven't any more ideas about locating the thing. I'll have to keep experimenting with the adjustments of my instruments, and if necessary add further ray units until I can get the indicators to record direction and distance again. Perhaps in the mean time the terrestrial current that's playing havoc with us will subside.

"I see our green and white folk are stirring again in the valley. Let's get on with the story."

So we turned back to the screen on which were shown the images of our strange people beginning their tasks again. Professor Fleckner succeeded, this time, in exploring the valley a little more widely. Presently we came upon a house of gold much larger than the rest, half hidden in a big rock cleft surrounded by high, golden palings. A cohort of green men armed with heavy gold clubs guarded it.

While we were examining this curious structure, Olanda, the singer, came out of the gate. We judged then, and rightly as it proved, that this was the palace of Madga, her father and chief of the valley.

The girl hurried down the river shore until she came to the little cove where we had first seen her. She had in her hand a little golden spade and with this she began hastily digging in the sands along the water's edge. It was here she had found that bit of the mysterious treasure which her father had snatched away at the time when we first saw her. Evidently she was looking for more of it. It was evident, too, from marks along the shore that she or others had dug there many times since the finding of the first treasure.

After an hour of fruitless search she threw down the spade petulantly and turned away in despair. For a long time she stood staring off over the water in deep thought, now and then stooping and picking up a diamond or amethyst or ruby and abstractedly tossing it into the stream.

Suddenly her eyes widened as with the dawning of an idea. She clapped her hands in delight and sped away down the river road. In front of one of the houses that lined this highway her steps lagged and she began to hum softly her familiar melody.

She had nearly passed the house, when a young man came out of the door, and ran toward her. He was not the favored lover we had first seen with her.

"Olanda," he called. "May I walk with you?"

"You may," she replied, "if you'll comfort me a little. I'm in trouble."

"Trouble?" he said, falling in step with her. There could be no doubt from the expression on his face that he was one of her suitors. "You know I would do anything I can to help you. What is it?"

"You can't help me," she answered. "It takes treasure to help me."

"Treasure!" he exclaimed, stiffening a little. "But I have it, a little of it. I have been saving it for a purpose. I must have a full measure of it before long if I am ever to be happy, Olanda."

She smiled back at him so understandingly that his face flushed with hope.

"But I need only one little nugget and I need it now," she said. "I must have a new robe and my

father won't let me have it unless I find and give him one nugget of treasure. He is growing more of a miser all the time. He thinks I am finding treasure and hiding it from him, but I'm not. Oh, if you could only let me have one little nugget to get my robe. I will repay you when I get another."

The infatuated youth hesitated only an instant. Then, bidding her wait, he went into his house and returned in a few minutes with something tightly clutched in his hand. He gave it to the girl and she hastily concealed it in her robe. The look she gave him was a rich reward.

"Now I must go home and get my new robe," she said and left him to his musings.

But she was no sooner out of his sight than she slowed her pace, and went thoughtfully along, head bowed as though considering her next move.

"Olanda!" came a joyous hail from the mouth of a ravine she was passing. Another youth stepped into sight and beckoned her.

"Come in a little way where we won't be seen," he said. "I have something to show you."

The girl obeyed wonderingly.

"First tell me, Olanda," the young man asked anxiously, "can I hope that you wish it to be me who brings the measure of treasure to your father?"

The warm, shy look she gave him was answer enough.

"Never was there a surer hope," she whispered.

"Then look," he said proudly, displaying a golden measure he drew from his robe.

Their heads bent over it together. We could not see the contents, but they caused the girl to cry out with delight.

"Almost half a measure already!" she exclaimed. "Where did you come by such wealth?"

"I searched and found them during sleep times when no one could spy on me. I dug them from the rocks up along the Big Ravine. There are no more there, for I've searched every space. But I know I'll get the rest."

"And if I had only three of them now I would be happy," the girl sighed. And then she repeated the story of the new robe, only this time she placed her father's demand at three nuggets.

"But if I give them to you," the youth demurred, "it will take me that much the longer to win you."

She turned away in disdain.

"If you are to turn miser like my father you will never win my heart," she sneered.

At that he capitulated and in a moment the fair schemer left him with the three nuggets stored away in her robe beside the first.

All that day she roamed about the river shore and contrived to meet altogether twenty love-sick swains, each of whom, in his turn, listened to some variation of the story of the new robe and parted with one or more nuggets of the treasure he was accumulating to buy her from her father. Each was made to think he was the favored suitor and that greatly strengthened his generosity. Three times during the day when the collection of nuggets under her robe threatened to become conspicuous, she went down to the little cove where she had been fruitlessly digging and buried them.

The last time she visited the cove, she stopped first at her father's palace and when she reached the burial place of the treasure she took out from under her robe a golden measure. She scooped out the buried nuggets and piled them in this measure, then reburied the whole.

Again she kept the treasure hidden under the edge of her robe so cautiously that we got no chance to analyze it.

By now it was sleep time again in the valley. But the girl, instead of going directly home, strolled a little way up the glen and sat down on a golden boulder, as if waiting for some one.

A few minutes later, steps were heard above her and Grudga, her favored lover, swung himself down the bank.

She sprang to her feet and went to him in excitement.

"I must leave at once," she whispered, drawing close to him. "After you are sure all others are asleep come here again and dig in the sands by the river where I found the nugget that day. You will find there the measureful you seek."

Then she turned and fled. Her lover, his face shining with elation, left the glen in the opposite direction and in a few moments all was silent in the valley.

I had been so absorbed by this clever plot that I had forgotten to watch Priestley. But now, at this final revelation of the character of his lovely lady of Tantalus and this decided setback to his romance, he arose and went abruptly to his room and closed the door.

"I think I'll snatch a little sleep, too," I said. "Call me if there are any complications when the young man digs up his treasure or if you get any new clues."

I must have slept for some time when I was awakened by an excited cry from Fleckner. Priestley was already by the screen when I got there.

"Nothing new has happened in the valley," Fleckner explained, "but I've made a surprising discovery. It isn't a valley at all, but a great cave!

"I put in another generator unit after you two left me and tried the machine out again. I had a good deal better control of it. I began exploring up and down the cliffs with the rays and suddenly found that where there should be blue sky overhead was a solid roof of gold, about a thousand feet above the river level. This roof is white-hot, probably from a molten lava deposit above it, and that furnishes light and heat to the inhabitants of the cave. There must be openings to the air somewhere, but I haven't discovered them yet.

"But that's not the best of my discoveries. After that I tried my ray direction indicator again and found it working. The ray is pointing straight down.

"Our Treasure of Tantalus is directly beneath our very feet!"

CHAPTER XXV

Olanda's Plot Overreaches

PROFESSOR FLECKNER'S delight at his discovery was unbounded.

"Treasure of Tantalus!" he raved. "Here we've been hunting for months to find the puny stealings of the crime trust and right beneath us, right under little old New York is treasure greater than the present combined wealth of the world. And, it's ours, ours for the taking! Wait till I get my instrument to working perfectly again and we'll

make old Madga our slave. He'll bring cartloads of gold and jewels to our door whenever we send for him. I believe Chandler told the truth. He wouldn't be wasting time trying to be President if he had known where this treasure lay."

"But," I broke in, "do you really think this Madga is the real head of the crime trust? Why should he need to direct a big organization for plundering society when nature gave him such wealth?"

"Ah, my boy!" Fleckner countered. "It was power he wanted. What is treasure without the power it brings? He created his organization to give him that power. He had to use wealth as a bait to make them work for him. Why should he reveal his great natural treasure-house or pay them out of it when he could make them steal their own pay and then hand it over to him to keep as well? The stealing was just to jolly them along. You see, he employed the same methods that he is using below ground with this mysterious other Treasure by which he rules his barbarous followers!"

"And those other people in the cave, who are they?" I persisted.

"Oh, doubtless the green men are prehistoric savages who got lost underground ages ago. The white men are probably descended from early white settlers who wandered into the cave and also got lost. But I must get busy and tinker up this old machine so I can find the entrance to our cave of Tantalus."

While Fleckner worked over the telephonoscope controls, Priestley, more restless than ever, was unable to sit still two minutes in succession. I could read his thoughts in his transparent countenance as easily as though he had spoken them. The duplicity of the beautiful Olanda had not destroyed his infatuation. He was consumed with a fever to get to her before the lover she so far favored could reap the fruits of her trickery and claim her from her father. If the Professor was right in his conclusions, Priestley might be able within a few hours to present himself before her in person.

I confess that I myself was more than half convinced and not a little anxious to bring on the dénouement. To mitigate my impatience, I whiled away the time by reading the newspapers, which in our excitement over the affairs of Tantalus, we had neglected for some days.

Professor Fleckner's preoccupation with other matters and his inability any longer to use his telephonoscope at will had, of course, removed his guiding hand from the malicious activities of the crime trust for many days.

But a glance at the papers showed that the reign of terror he had started had gone on under its own momentum, increasing like a snowball rolling down a hill. It was to be assumed that organized trust activities had ceased, as the gang would not dare to act without its leader's orders. But the publicity given to the series of inspired robberies and blackmailing plots had evidently stirred to life the morally defective traits of many individuals all over the globe who had not been enrolled in the organization. For the papers teemed each day with reports of a world-wide crime wave.

The distrust in banks and business corporations that he had started had grown until the nations were in the throes of a financial panic. Countless business and bank failures were noted. Unemployment for the first time in half a century had again become epidemic.

In the political world the results were even more serious. The two or three instances of apparent bad faith on the part of statesmen, manufactured by the professor, had set the imagination of the politicians to work. No one any longer trusted any one else. Dissensions were breaking out everywhere between the component nations of the League. The League Council was rent with strife. It looked as though the permanence of the League itself were threatened and as if another world war were imminent.

A minor phase of the activities of Fleckner's Frankenstein was an epidemic of reports of disappearing persons, started by the kidnaping of the twelve men who knew the telephonoscope secret.

Every man, woman or child who was lost sight of by family or business associates for a few hours was reported kidnaped. Miss Stimson's disappearance had been noted in lurid headlines among others.

I had nearly finished my reading when, on the front page of the paper of the day before there leaped before my eyes a story that at first amused me greatly in spite of my heartsickness over the tales of havoc I had been digesting. Then, as I read it through, I was filled with consternation. This was the headline.

WORLD FAMOUS SCIENTIST REPORTED AMONG MISSING

Professor Rufus Fleckner, Celebrated Inventor, Believed Kidnaped by South American Bandits —Last Seen in Northern Chile

The fiction of a trip through the Andes which Fleckner had arranged as an alibi, by projecting his image into various South American cities and giving out interviews there, had proved a boomerang.

There was a sensational interview with Dr. Bonstelle of Columbia University in which he told of the telephone call from Professor Fleckner and the strange language he had consulted him about. Hearing nothing from Fleckner after his second phone call, Bonstelle, eager to learn more, had tried to get in touch with the professor through brother scholars in Chile. But when they attempted to trace him from town to town, it had become apparent that he had disappeared in the mountains. After he had been missing for some time the Chileans became alarmed, reported it to the government and searching parties of soldiers were now beating the mountain passes for news of him.

Meanwhile his friends in New York had become greatly exercised and now proposed asking the police to break into his apartment to seek possible clues as to the itinerary he had planned.

It was this last proposal that filled me with alarm. I tried to show the article to Fleckner but he waved me away so impatiently that I decided to wait a little till I could get him to give his attention to the seriousness of this new development.

In case of a legalized attempt to enter his home, Fleckner had counted on getting any such order revoked by his hold on the legal machinery through his power over crime trust agents. With the telephonoscope out of control this, of course, was impossible.

I, therefore, became as interested as Fleckner and Priestley in seeing the repairing of the instrument

hastened. He was now putting the finishing touches on a new set of generators. I watched with breathless eagerness while he was connecting them up. If he found this time that he could now break the rays away from the terrestrial current and use them at will as before, I meant to show him the last newspaper article I had read and warn him to take steps at once to head off the proposed police raid on the laboratory.

But just as he tightened the last screw of the new battery, something happened on the screen that diverted my attention from affairs on the surface of the earth. I was destined to forget for some time to come all newspapers and their sinister warnings.

Grudga, the favored suitor of Olanda, was stealthily entering the little dell by the river to dig up, as the girl had told him to do, the measure of "treasure" that she had so craftily gathered and buried there. He reached the point she had indicated and with trembling eagerness dug in the sand with a golden spade until he uncovered the measure the girl had buried.

He clutched it to his breast and drew a fold of his tunic over it. Then as stealthily as he had come, he started to leave the ravine.

"Now, Olanda, dear heart, you are mine!" he murmured joyously.

But at that the shrubbery parted and a sinister figure stepped forth. Grudga stopped in alarm.

"Hendriga, the half-breed!" he gasped.

He turned to flee, but the other leaped forward and bore him to the ground.

The newcomer was a powerful figure, with the heavy, muscular development of the green men, and the tall, straight frame of the white men combined. His hue was light but a slight greenish cast showed the strain of inferior blood. His youthful features were regular but their expression was one of cruel cunning.

"So Olanda is yours?" he sneered. "Not while Hendriga has power in his arms."

He clutched his mighty fingers into the throat of his prostrate rival until the latter's gasping breath ceased. Then he transferred the measure of treasure to his own tunic and contemptuously tossed the lifeless body into the stream.

"Now Hendriga will claim the fair Olanda," he muttered as he walked swiftly away.

CHAPTER XXVI

Time Slips Its Cogs

IT was the voice of Priestley that first broke the spell of horror that held us.

"We must stop him! We must stop him! Try the projector now!" he cried, leaping for the control-board.

But Fleckner was ahead of him and already working frantically at the lever that might project our images down and confront the fleeing murderer.

It was of no use. The projector failed. Fleckner had to content himself by following with his ray the form of Hendriga who was now well on the way to the house of Madga, his prospective father-in-law.

The rest period was just ended. Beyond the golden stockades could be heard the bustle of the awakening household. The green men who had stood guard during the rest period were about to change watches with the work period guards. There was a voluble chatter of greetings and scraps of gossip.

Hendriga made known to the guard at the gate that he wished to see Madga, the chief. While the guard took the message within, the half-breed stood eagerly eyeing the shining gold wicket as if he could ill restrain his impatience to state his triumphant errand. We heard the shuffling steps of the guard returning and heard him fumbling at the chain within.

At that instant there was the snap of a broken circuit in the network of the telephonoscope wires under the control-board and the screen went blank.

"A curse on that fuse!" Fleckner muttered, throwing open the fuse-box, ripping out the melted metal and slipping in a new one with the swift precision of his practised fingers. "That added battery of generators overloads the thing a little."

He made some rapid adjustments among the bewildering mass of coils and switches.

"There, that's better," he announced. "I'll get a little more power in the ray now."

I had anxiously watched the clock while this was going on. A shade less than three minutes passed between the cutting off of the picture on the screen and the instant when it flashed back as Fleckner switched on the power of his repaired instrument.

We stared in bewilderment. At first it seemed that the ray must have shifted and given us an entirely different outlook.

But closer inspection showed the same outline of overhanging precipice and the house in its deep cleft. The dwelling was of the same form and size. The river passed it at the same sweeping curve. There was the same vista of the valley visible from the gate.

Yet the gate which three minutes before had been in perfect repair, now hung half open from a single hinge. A broken bit of chain dangled from its latch. The golden palings when we last saw them had gleamed with the brilliancy of frequent polishing by green-hued slaves. Now they were dull and battered, as from long neglect and lack of repair.

The roadway in front of the house that had been kept in perfect condition, showed great cracks and worn gaps. What had been neat grass-plots between the road and the paling three minutes before were patches of weeds. Between the palings and the house, where before had been close-clipped shrubbery, were big trees.

And the sturdy, laughing young guards, who had stood alertly in front of the palings a moment before, some dozen strong, were all gone. In their place there perched on a boulder by the gate a dirty, dejected old man, looking more like a beggar than a guard.

What could it mean? This could not be the same place. Our rays must have been diverted by the blowing out of the fuse. This must be another near-by cavern, I conjectured, in which a prosperous race had formerly dwelt. Perhaps Madga himself had once lived there and built this house and later for some reason moved to the other and strikingly similar valley and duplicated the structures in it. It would not be out of keeping with the other performances of this strange master-defective. I voiced these theories to Fleckner.

"That may be," he agreed. "I was thinking something of the sort myself. We'll soon find out."

He started to swing the rays about and search for another cave when we heard voices within the great

house, high-pitched, angry voices, speaking in the now familiar tongue of the cavern.

Fleckner sent our rays through the open gate past the neglected garden into the house. His last addition to his generator power had enabled them once more to penetrate surfaces.

In the main hall were three people engaged in a heated wrangle. There was something about each of them strangely familiar yet weirdly different. There was a middle-aged woman, tall and still slender and fair of skin. Her features were strikingly like those of Olanda, daughter of the chief. Indeed she might well be the girl's mother. But the expression of the face was hard, cold and petulant.

The old, well-preserved man beside her was even more like Madga, father of Olanda, than was the woman like his daughter. His was the same erect figure, arrogant bearing, and crafty, avaricious expression. The features seemed an almost exact duplicate of Madga's, save for more pronounced lines of age. The only difference between them was in their flowing hair and beard. Madga's was rusty gold. This man's snowy white.

And the third member was startlingly like Hendriga, the half-breed, excepting that he was older and his hair streaked with gray.

THE first words of the woman startled and bewildered us even more than what we had already seen.

"You treat us like children, my father!" she complained, facing the older man with blazing eyes. "They call me Olanda, daughter of Madga, Chief of the Valley. I am more like Madga's slave. Not for twenty years now have I so much as seen a bit of 'treasure,' not since this creature bought me from you."

We looked at each curiously, each wondering if the others saw and heard the same thing.

"Yes, he bought you dearly, worthless girl, and I made well in the selling. You ask me for 'treasure' now? Have I not kept and clothed you both these many years, and when did you pay me any 'treasure' for it?"

"We have worked and slaved for you when your old slaves fled from you because you abused them and never gave them pay except useless promises of 'treasure,'" the man broke in. "If I had not had some of the blood of the green men in my veins and been able to control them, therefore, they would have murdered you long ago."

The woman looked at the speaker in loathing.

"Don't talk of murder, Hendriga," she shuddered. "I have not forgotten how you won me. And don't boast of your blood before me. I——"

She broke off suddenly.

"Enough of this," she added in a whisper. "Here come the children. It is not necessary that my boys hear how their father won their mother by killing the man she really loved."

"Nor how their mother furnished her purchase 'treasure' by robbing a score of other suitors," he retorted.

At that three half-grown boys rushed into the room.

"Mother! Mother! Don't let them get me!" cried the smallest of the three, rushing up to the woman.

"He's found 'treasure,' mother," one of the others cried. "We're just playing, you know. We're robbers, trying to steal it from him."

"What has the boy got?" demanded the old man excitedly, snatching the chubby fist of the youngest boy and prying out of it a small nugget.

The old man gave one look at it and threw it away in disgust.

"Nothing but gold!" he muttered. "Will no one ever give me any more treasure?"

At that there was another loud report under the telephonoscope control-board, and again the screen went blank.

We sat and stared at each other for a full minute without speaking. Priestley was trembling like a man wth the ague. He was the first to break silence.

"Did you two see and hear what I saw and heard?" he demanded.

Fleckner, who was himself visibly agitated, looked at me as if to read my face. I could only nod dumbly.

"We think we did," Fleckner said at length. "What it means I can't imagine."

He began mechanically to repair the blown-out fuse, while Priestley and I communed with our bewildered thoughts.

This time he took some fifteen minutes at the work, and seemed in no hurry to turn back to that sordid, maddening mystery of the underground.

At length he threw on the current.

"I put in a larger main cable," he said. "It'll carry the current better and give the ray more power."

The golden palace again flashed on the screen. At the first glance we saw that still another change had taken place. Now the road in front of the building was almost obliterated. The palings were torn away; the yard was a tangle of underbrush and big trees that almost hid the house from sight.

Fleckner handled the control levers in a half daze. He sent the ray once more into the big room, where we had just witnessed such a strange scene.

Here we got another shock, for which, it is true, the appearance of things on the outside had in a measure prepared us. On a couch by the far wall lay an emaciated old man gasping for breath. Twice we looked before we recognized Madga, the chief.

He looked as though twenty years had passed since we had last seen him, erect and virile, scarcely twenty minutes before.

Beside him sat a gray-haired woman, a little bent, a little wrinkled, but still strong and alert. Her face was as cold and cruel as that of the aged wreck on the couch. But it was, nevertheless, the face of Olanda, the singer—Olanda suddenly grown old and terrible by some malignant alchemy that left us doubting whether, after all these years of scientific skepticism, the Arabian tales of black magic were not the literal truth.

"Food! Food! Olanda, give me food! Will you starve your old father to death?" quavered the sick man.

"I will," answered the harsh, cold voice of the metamorphosed Olanda. "You get no food till you tell me where you have hidden the treasure. This is the last time I'll ask you. Tell me now or I'll leave you to die."

"I give up," he gasped. "Lean close, or your sons may hear."

She bent over him, while he whispered something

we could not catch. Then she arose and sped from the room, not seeming to hear the feeble cry from the couch of "Food! Food!"

In the next room four people awaited her eagerly. One, Hendriga, now an old man, still erect and sturdy, ugly, malignant, avaricious as ever. The others were men in early middle life, fine of form and regular of features, but in the complexion of each a faint touch of green hue and in their countenances a predominant expression of cruel avarice.

They were young dandies in dress, tunics, trousers, and sandals new and bedecked with glittering gems. About the head of each was a circlet of gold, each bearing over the forehead a single great gem, one a diamond, one a ruby, and one an emerald. So closely did they resemble each other that they could be distinguished only by these gems.

Olanda looked at her husband, then at the younger men.

"My sons," she said haughtily, "leave us. I wish to speak to your father alone."

The three young men glanced at each other questioningly and nodded with secret understanding. He of the diamond circlet acted as spokesman.

"No," he said firmly, addressing his father. "We can no longer be ordered about like children. The old man, our grandfather, has told you where he has stored the treasure. That is not a secret for your keeping. The old man's life is done. Let him die. You, too, are old, and could not rule for many years. You have already shown yourselves unfit to rule as we believe this valley should be ruled. The green slaves have fled. Our white race, too, has nearly deserted us.

"We have decided to take the rule into our own hands and bring back the old days of prosperity. You will tell us the secret of the treasure. We will take it and use it rightly. Don't deny us. You are but two and old, and one a woman. We are three young, strong men.

"We have already barred the windows. Tell us where the treasure is or we will go out and bar the door, and leave you here to starve as you have starved our grandfather. We will leave you now for a little time to think it over, and will return for our answer."

As the three unnatural sons strode out of the room, the fuse of the telephonoscope again blew out and left the screen in darkness.

CHAPTER XXVII

After a Thousand Years

TO me it was an intense relief when the breaking down of the instrument gave us another respite from watching this tragic, sordid miracle unfold. I was limp with horror and amazement. Yet, shaken as I was myself, my pity went out to Priestley. He had seen his high ideal dashed down.

"It simply can't be! It's absurd, utterly impossible! And yet—— Tell me, Blair, what did you see? I wonder if I've been dreaming."

I shook myself together and considered my answer.

"I saw, or seemed to see," I replied finally, "a generation pass in less than an hour, fifty years of time roll away in a flash, characters changed in a twinkling from fresh, youthful innocence to sordid age, through the evil influence of a perverted lust for material wealth."

"Did you see that, too, Professor Fleckner?" Priestley asked.

Fleckner looked at me searchingly. I think my reference to the degeneration of character stung him a little.

"I seemed to," he admitted. "Or else I was looking upon some equally mysterious picture prophecy of events to be, or perhaps what some hidden prophet believes they will be."

"Then we have all been hypnotized!" Priestley exclaimed. "I wonder if Olanda ever existed or if she was merely a dream picture of some one's imagining?"

"The answer to that is our complete cinema and phonograph records," the professor reminded him. "You can't hypnotize a wax disk or a celluloid film."

As if to verify his own faith, he tried several of the familiar records, one or two of them reproducing the scenes in which time had apparently slipped a cog.

"There is no doubt that the pictures we thought we saw on the screen and the sounds we thought we heard, we really did see and hear. I'm beginning to wonder, however, if we have not been the victims of some colossal hoax, though what it may be I can't imagine. Depend upon it, nevertheless, miracles don't happen. This thing has a natural explanation, and I'm going to find it."

"Why not consult Miss Stimson?" I asked, suddenly remembering the clever young woman who was supposedly listening in and watching over her auxiliary telephonoscope. "Feminine intuition, coupled with a brain as clever as hers might have some good suggestions to offer."

"Thank you, Mr. Blair; I heard that," came her voice from the screen. "I have seen and heard the same things as you gentlemen, apparently. Perhaps I'm silly, but here's what I thought might be the explanation. Perhaps we've been simply looking at a motion-picture show. No, I'm not joking. Some one in the crime trust may have learned of the telephonoscope, and with the aid of a clever scientist, invented a counter-instrument that has caught and held your telephonoscope ray.

"Then they may have conceived the idea of getting up this fantastic film picture with the idea of baffling and bewildering you. They could put it on a screen in front of your ray and get the effect, couldn't they?"

"They could, my dear young lady," Fleckner agreed, "but they didn't. Pictures of dummy gold and diamonds would not respond to the spectrum test. That cave of gold is real, as I proved when we first saw it."

"That might be," she persisted, "and at the same time they could stage a picture play there, couldn't they?"

"Well," Fleckner agreed, "improbable as your suggestion seems, at least it has a scientific basis and isn't as absurd as the jumping ahead fifty years in time that we seemed to see. I'll get my instrument going again and try to test that theory out a little. I'm hoping I'll be able to get a second ray in operation and work it independently of the first. Then I can locate our picture again, and, by placing the second ray around it, discover if there are any stage-trappings or other trickery."

IT was nearly an hour this time before the instrument was again ready for use. Fleckner made several readjustments. Finally he turned on the ray and disclosed once more the dilapidated golden palace as we had seen it last. There had been no great slip in the passage of time since our last view, for in the big sealed-up room where their unnatural sons had imprisoned them we still found old Olanda and her half-breed husband.

Nevertheless, more time seemed to have elapsed in the picture story than the clock on our laboratory wall showed, for the old couple had the appearance of having starved for several days. They were weak and emaciated. The arrogance had gone from their countenances.

"I can stand it no longer," Olanda whispered. "When our sons return again we must tell them the hiding-place of the treasure and beg for food."

"Yes, I suppose we must—curse them!" Hendriga muttered feebly.

Fleckner had been adjusting his reflection-spectrum analyzer and testing the materials reflected in the picture.

"See!" he exclaimed. "Those materials are real gold and precious stones and actual human flesh. If we were looking at photographs reflected on a screen at the other end the analyzer would show nothing but the material in the canvas of their screen.

"We'll check it another way now if I can work the rotater of the ray end after that last readjustment. We'll be able to look in turn at all sides of the bodies in the picture and determine if they are solid or merely flat reflections."

He tried the rotation control, and this time the ray responded perfectly. The room and the two wretched occupants slowly revolved on the screen, showing the scene from every angle.

"No doubt of it!" Fleckner concluded. "We're looking at a real spectacle containing real people."

"But," protested the voice of Miss Stimson from the other apartment, "it may be play-acting for our benefit, nevertheless."

"Well," said Fleckner, "let's try a second ray on the outside of the house."

He turned on a second ray, and, as he had hoped, it worked independently of the first. Keeping the interior on one end of the screen, we showed the outside of the house on another section.

But now another amazing change had taken place. Inside of the house seen by the first ray was still the period of Madga's death and Olanda's and Hendriga's old age, and their sons' middle age. Outside the house was the state in which we had seen it that day when we had found Olanda and her husband, then in early middle life and their sons small boys. There was even the single old green-hued slave guarding the half-broken gate.

While we were wondering at this, we were struck with new amazement. Around the corner of the house came the middle-aged Olanda, her three little boys playing around her.

By now our capacity for experiencing the emotion of amazement had been overstrained. We gazed dully at the parallel pictures of the sturdy, matronly Olanda without, and the aged, emaciated Olanda within.

Even as we looked, there entered into the picture of the interior of the room, by way of our first ray, the three grown-up sons to make final demand for revelation of the secret from their aged parents, and at the same time outside of the house, seen over the second ray, were those same sons, innocent children playing around their mother's robe.

In this strange underground world it would seem that time did not merely leap forward with lightning speed, but in some places leaped back again. But Professor Fleckner had suddenly lost his late bewilderment. He was manipulating his levers with an intent eagerness. I knew the old scientist was on the trail of a clue to this puzzle.

"I'm going to swing in a third ray," he muttered half to himself.

At once another section of the great cave valley appeared seen through the third ray on the other end of the screen. And here time had slipped back still another notch. The valley, once more spruce, trim, and prosperous, was teeming with the life we had first seen there.

Fleckner shifted this first ray about till he located the little ravine where we had first seen Olanda. Again our ears were enchanted by that marvelous song, and again we saw her in the beauty of her fresh maidenhood, and, beside her, her murdered lover returned to life.

At this Priestley leaped to his feet, his face aglow with incredulous joy. I think for the moment he was half mad. He seemed to have forgotten our presence.

"Olanda! Olanda!" he cried. "I knew I'd see you again. The rest has been a bad dream!" He recovered himself immediately. "Let me handle that third ray," he pleaded. "I—I want to watch her a little."

"Go as far as you like, my boy," Fleckner conceded. "I think by increasing the strength of that ray you can follow the lady right back to her infancy if you wish. For I'm sure I've solved the riddle."

But this was lost to Priestley, who was raptly watching the picture of his Lady of Tantalus living her life over again.

I watched the professor with intense curiosity while he set down elaborate calculations on his desk-pad, stopping now and then to make readings of ray directions and strength on his instrument dials.

At length he looked up and regarded Priestley curiously, a touch of pity in his hard, old face.

"I've got it," he said quietly. "Our cave of Tantalus and its treasure and its people are not on our earth at all, but on a distant planet so far away that it takes its light a thousand years to reach us. Priestley, my boy, I'm sorry. Your Olanda was very real once, but she lived her life and died a thousand years ago."

CHAPTER XXVIII

Fleckner Dethroned

"LIKE everything else, it's very simple when you understand it," the professor went on, while we stared at him stupidly, unable to grasp his astounding statement. "I wouldn't have been deceived so long if I had kept track of the direction our rays were turned after I got the control apparatus restored.

"You see, the first time I got the direction of our ray and found it pointing straight down, I jumped to the conclusion that our Tantalus land was in the

bowels of the earth directly underneath us. That idea seemed to be confirmed by our finding that land to be located in a great cave. I was so absorbed in our treasure hunt that it didn't occur to me to test the ray direction again until a few minutes ago. Then I found it pointing straight up.

"I knew at once that our cave of Tantalus was on another heavenly body than ours. Our earth had of course swung around in its orbit and revolved on its axis, and the direction, naturally, was changing constantly.

"In a flash the whole explanation of the apparently miraculous shifting back and forth of time came to me. I was right in believing that a general electrical current had caught and held our feebler ether ray out of control. But instead of a mere earth current it was a great interstellar torrent of electrical energy.

"Now, the ether wave motion that carries light, electricity, and other radio manifestations, as every student of physics knows, travels at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second. That is practically instantaneous, for all ordinary distances, but distances between stars are another matter. Some stars are so far away that it takes centuries for light to reach us from them.

"Such a star is this one on which our cave is located. By certain computations based on the known power of my various rays and the lapses in time between the visions they showed, I have found that sights and sounds that started over the ether waves from this star—Tantalus we'll call it—a thousand years ago would just be reaching us now, a thousand years after they happened.

"Well, our rays from the telephonoscope, which is variable in speed according to its intensity, shot out into space against this current only a comparatively short distance at first, perhaps twenty light years. In other words, it picked up the scenes and sounds from Tantalus only a little before the ether waves bearing them would naturally reach the earth. Our ray with its vastly greater speed transferred those scenes to our screen practically instantly. They happened to be the scenes of Olanda's youth.

"Then I doubled the power of our ray, and it shot out twenty light years farther and gathered scenes coming over the ether waves twenty years later, all in an instant. Again I increased its speed another twenty light years, and in an instant we saw Olanda as an old woman.

"Just now we set three rays of three different lengths and speeds at work. As a result we saw the same general locality in Tantalus in three different periods at once.

"But now I must readjust the rays to still higher speed and watch Olanda's sons claim the grandfather's wealth. I must find out what is that mysterious Treasure of Tantalus that is so much more precious than gold and jewels. It may give us a hint of something valuable on our earth that we have overlooked. I want to see, too, what success those three young men had in rehabilitating their valley."

Thus while Priestley and I sat, still overwhelmed by this stupendous revelation of vast spaces and the solemn moral lesson that had been borne to us over the bridge of a thousand dead years, the old scientist dismissed the marvel with a contemptuous wave of the hand and set out again on the trail of his sordid curiosity. He fell to work at the adjusting of his instrument, at first with methodical precision; but I noticed presently that his hands trembled and that he was laboring under suppressed excitement.

The work didn't proceed smoothly. He made little mechanical slips more and more frequently, and had to undo and repeat parts of his work. He would fly into a rage each time this happened. I fell to studying his face. I noted for the first time how haggard and deathly pale he had become from weeks of neglect of sleep and proper food, during which his brain had been continually afire with his mad obsession.

At length he threw on the power of the ray section he had been working on, and it failed to work at all. He had forgotten to replace a perfectly simple connection of one of the main cables.

At that he flew into a still more violent rage. He thrashed about the laboratory, waving his arms in the air and snarling inarticulately like a maddened animal. Priestley, John, and I leaped to our feet and stood back in alarm. The man was evidently mad.

Suddenly he stopped short in the middle of the floor and clasped his head tensely between his hands.

"My mind has failed me!" he shrieked. "I can't find the treasure! The sons of Olanda will hide it from me! I can't——"

He swayed, and before any of us could catch him, he fell forward on his face and lay there, deathly quiet.

GENTLY we raised the gaunt figure, now so completely powerless, and laid him on the bed in his own room. He was breathing heavily, but was unconscious.

In this emergency, Priestley became the embodiment of cool, masterful efficiency. He despatched John to the drug-closet for a stimulant and administered it. The professor revived partially under its influence and began muttering incoherently.

"Go and release Miss Stimson, John," Priestley directed next. "We need an emergency nurse at once, and only a woman will answer. You stay in the room here with her to help in case he gets violent.

"Now we must get a doctor in immediately. We've got to throw secrecy to the wind, and before the doctor arrives, we've got to get up a plausible story to account for things. I'll start off by calling a doctor and giving him a yarn."

At this moment Miss Stimson returned with John. I could not see clearly what effect her long confinement and intense excitement had on that remarkable young woman, for her face was, as usual, partly obscured by the green eye-shade. I felt a wave of tenderness and embarrassment pass over me when I saw her once more, but my heart sank again with the old hopelessness when I perceived that she scarcely noticed me, but was shyly studying Priestley's alert face.

But he was already calling up Dr. Arthur Thorndyke, who, he learned from the girl, was Fleckner's physician. We waited with breathless interest, to hear what explanation he would give the doctor.

"Dr. Thorndyke," he said when he reached the physician, "this is Thomas Priestley—yes, Thomas Priestley, the very same, the man who's wanted by the district attorney. What's that? Oh, don't let that worry you. I'm going to give myself up as soon as I can. I'm the victim of a conspiracy, that's all.

I'll clear myself easily enough. It's a long story, and I'll tell you all about it later. This is professional confidence now.

"I've been kept prisoner by the conspirators who've been using Professor Rufus Fleckner's apartment as a rendezvous and prison for me ever since the professor went to South America on his trip. They waylaid the professor in Chile and kidnaped him, too. He escaped and got back last night by airplane. The bunch here fled when they found he'd escaped.

"Now we want you up here at once, please. Professor Fleckner's experience knocked him out. He collapsed a few minutes ago. He's unconscious and in a critical condition. You'll be right up? Thank you.

"Now," he said, as soon as he'd hung up, "get James and John and the cook in here, and we'll frame up our story. Well," he went on, when we were all present, "it's obvious we can't reveal the true story of the crime trust. That would create worse world-wide panic even than already exists.

"Consequently we can't give Fleckner's performances away, even if we wanted to. We don't want to. If he dies, there's no use in disgracing the memory of a great scientist whose mind temporarily went wrong. If he lives we'll need him to help undo the harm he has done.

"Now our story, I suggest, should be this: We'll admit the existence of a band of criminals, but we'll profess to know nothing of their identity. We'll give no hint that any prominent persons were involved. We'll allege that they learned of Professor Fleckner's invention, the telephonoscope, and wanted to make use of it. They had to get everybody out of the way who knew about it. They learned that the professor and Blair, here, were starting for South America, so that automatically disposed of them. They hatched up a charge against me to make my disappearance plausible, and then kidnaped Miss Stimson and me out from under the nose of the law and hid us here after Fleckner went. Then they meantime captured the twelve other gentlemen who knew the secret.

"When the criminals' representatives, sent to South America to keep track of the professor, learned he was about to return they kidnaped him and Blair. They escaped and returned here last night by airplane, entering, by the roof, of course, and surprising the gang here, who promptly fled.

"That makes it possible to give out the secret of the telephonoscope and explain in a measure the mischief it has wrought, but put the blame on an unknown person. We have several tangled situations to unravel and several mysteries to solve. We must move with extreme caution, and, I'm afraid, practise some justifiable deception, or we will do more harm than good.

"First, the telephonoscope itself. What shall we do with it? We've seen the terrible results of this power to invade privacy. Shall we force Fleckner to destroy it and let his secret die with him?

"Then what shall we do with the crime trust? If we expose it and its entire personnel we'll smite every community in the country with tragedy and disgrace. We'll fill the world with even greater distrust than at present. We must find some way to stop its evil activities without creating a revolution in the present social organization by exposing it.

"We must restore the plunder of the trust. We have three mysteries to solve there: Was there a man higher up than Chandler? Where is the secret plunder of the old trust? Where is the plunder that Fleckner gathered?

"Then there is the problem of retiring the immense amount of counterfeit money in the country without causing further financial panic.

"Now, in order that I may be free to help solve these mysteries and the problems involved, I'm going to give myself up to the district attorney at once, get released on bail, and have my trial put off until Fleckner is well enough to testify, in case he lives and his reason is restored.

"Now the doctor will be here at any moment. Is our story all straight? Are there any other problems we haven't thought of?"

I looked at Miss Stimson at that moment, and again caught her shy glance toward Priestley. I thought then there was a serious heart problem that promised to be the most difficult of all in the solving.

CHAPTER XXIX

Priestley Heads the Crime Trust

OF all the lurid tales that had filled the papers since the beginning of Professor Fleckner's reign of terror, none created a greater sensation than those which followed his breakdown. I had returned to my own paper that afternoon, and had the great glory and poor satisfaction of writing the first story. The fact that I was scoring the biggest "beat" in my newspaper career was entirely offset in my own mind by the knowledge that for the first time in that humble career I had perpetrated a "fake." I assure the reader that the writing of this true history after all these years has been a great relief to my conscience.

After outlining briefly in my introduction the story Priestley had suggested, I told how our party, after being kidnaped in the Andes by supposed Chilean bandits, had discovered that our captors were New York gangsters, whose names, however, we had not learned. We had escaped in a running fight during which we had killed the leaders of the gang.

We had returned the whole distance to New York by plane and surprised another section of the gang in Fleckner's apartments. They had been so taken by surprise that they had fled.

Then followed a description of Professor Fleckner's great invention, the telephonoscope. All the mysterious invasions of the world's privacy in recent months were attributed to the unauthorized use of that instrument by the gang while occupying his apartment in his absence.

I told of the capture of Priestley, Ruth Stimson, and the twelve men who knew of the telephonoscope. All these prisoners, I went on to relate, had been found in the Fleckner group of apartments and released. The twelve capitalists had been kept drugged and could tell nothing of how they got there or what happened.

Dr. Thorndyke was quoted as having found Professor Fleckner suffering from a complete nervous collapse and temporary insanity. The doctor, however, predicted his gradual recovery.

The rest of the story hinged on Priestley. The afternoon following Dr. Thorndyke's visit, he had

called at the district attorney's office and given himself up. He had been arraigned, pleaded not guilty, and released on heavy bail to be tried when Fleckner was able to testify.

To the district attorney, Priestley confided that he and Miss Stimson had overheard some things which led him to believe that, given time, he would be able to make certain that the criminal band had been broken up and possibly restore much of the loot of the recent epidemic of thieving, as he believed most of it had been accomplished by that gang.

Priestley promised to bring this about by organizing a secret detective corps and following up the clues he had picked up while a prisoner of the gang. He pledged half of his fortune, if need be, to the task.

The district attorney, at Priestley's request, assigned Assistant District Attorney Winter, secret member of the Upper Council of Three of the crime trust, to assist Priestley in this work.

The conversation that took place a little later between Priestley and that crime trust representative in the latter's private office in the Criminal Courts Building was a memorable one to both of them.

"Mr. Winter," Priestley said when they were alone, "for your own good, much more than mine, I warn you before I begin that there must be no record made of this conversation and no eavesdropping. So you will kindly disconnect your dictograph."

They sat looking each other hard in the eyes for a moment. What Winter saw in the face of his *vis-à-vis* taught him discretion. He smiled a little sheepishly, opened a drawer in his desk, and threw off a secret switch.

"Now do you feel better?" he asked with a forced attempt at gaiety.

"No, not exactly," Priestley replied evenly, "but in a minute you will feel not quite so badly as you would if you realized that other ears or eyes than yours were going to take in what I'm about to say. Perhaps you'll understand what I mean when I say that I am the head of the crime trust."

"What!" cried Winter leaping to his feet.

He was too surprised and alarmed to think of pretending not to understand.

"Sit down and don't get excited, Mr. Winter," Priestley adjured him. "All you have to do is to listen and obey. I'll do the talking.

"When I say I am the head of the crime trust I don't mean that I am the original head. I am a usurper of late date. I have overthrown your secret chief and have him entirely in my power. I know all of his secrets. Furthermore I have on file a complete list, with records of each, of every member of the secret organization. I have also an interesting collection of photographs and phonographic records of various crime trust episodes and conferences. These might interest you as samples."

He laid on the desk before Winter some of the photographs Fleckner had shown Chandler that memorable night when the Professor had taken over the leadership of the crime trust, omitting, of course, the ones in which Chandler himself was portrayed.

With trembling hands Winter turned them over one by one.

"Well," he said at last, "this is rather convincing. I assure you I will give you the same loyal service I gave the old chief, whoever he was. I hope you will overlook the treatment that was given you while you were prisoner. I was not personally responsible for that."

Priestley raised a deprecating hand.

"We'll overlook that," he said. "I've picked you because for many months now I have been studying you over Professor Fleckner's telephonoscope, which you've just heard me describe to the district attorney. I've made up my mind you are the best man to act as my lieutenant."

Winter began to regain his poise at this.

"I'm sure I'm glad I have your confidence," he said.

"Now let me explain further," Priestley went on. "A complete set of such photographs as this, together with moving pictures of the episodes they are taken from and phonographic records of conversations, and also a full list of all trust members with their careers, is in the hands of each one of a little group I'm working with. Also several sets are in safe-deposit under control of trustees with instructions to open and publish them if anything happens to me or any one of our group.

"So any attempt on the part of the old organization to put me or any of my associates out of the way will be automatically punished by exposure. And if that happens, God pity you. The public will never let you get as far as a prison farm. You'd be torn to shreds by a mob. Any refusal to carry out my orders will be likewise punished. We'll know because we'll keep you checked up with the telephonoscope."

"I understand," Winter replied humbly. "Tell me what you want me to do. I have no choice in the matter."

"There's where I have a surprise for you," Priestley went on. "From this moment on the crime trust is going to cease being a criminal organization and become a secret association for the enforcement of law and recovery of stolen property, organized by myself and my associates, as far as the general public will know, and cooperating with the New York County District Attorney's office through you. A single criminal act by any member hereafter will mean instant exposure of his past record."

Winter leaped to his feet, his face alight with incredulous joy.

"Do you mean that, Mr. Priestley? I can't tell you how glad I am to hear it. I'm sure a lot of the rest of us will feel the same way. We made one little slip once and attracted the attention of the organization. We got caught in the net and couldn't escape."

"I'm glad to hear you say that," Priestley replied heartily. "Now it's up to you to pass the word along to every last man. But you've all got to atone for your past. You have all been receiving a share of the crime trust profits. You must restore it, every man of you. Set the machinery of the organization in motion. Call for a report of money transferred to every branch and demand it back, by instalments, where necessary; but get it. Have each consignment go by van at night to Point No. 20, in Putnam County, where that $2,000,000 treasure van was lost. A van manned by men from the district attorney's office will meet it there and bring it into one of the trust companies which you will name as repository.

"Meantime compile a list from all over the country of every one who has been robbed since the crime trust began operation. Announce that our

secret agents are locating the lost plunder through crooks who have turned State's evidence, and begin paying back the money in instalments as fast as it comes in."

"But," Winter demurred, "much of our money is counterfeit."

"I've thought of that," Priestley admitted, "but it can't be told from real. To announce publicly that our paper money had been inflated by such an enormous amount of indistinguishable counterfeit stuff would complete our present panic, depreciate our currency almost to the vanishing point, destroy all confidence in our government issues and create general financial ruin. No. We must simply stop the counterfeiting plant at Fall River, utterly destroy it, and then let our present currency run its course. It will rectify itself when I discover the secret hiding-place of the stolen gold and we get it back into circulation. When the acute danger has passed a few years from now, we can use indirect methods to get the government to retire all present issues gradually. That's the best policy.

"Now I'll leave you to carry out these orders while I get after the hiding-place of the crime trust's treasure. I'll admit that the old head of the trust hasn't revealed it yet, but he's in my power and he'll do so rather than face exposure. Then I'll begin to ship gold to Point No. 20, and let you know when to meet it."

This interview with Winter, Priestley reported to me in detail, but of course I printed only the version meant for public consumption. A few days later I had the pleasure of publishing the first results of the new régime of the former crime trust under the leadership of Priestley, when the first vanload of restored money was met at the trysting-place by the district attorney's men. Winter had some trouble getting his chief, the district attorney, to agree to Priestley's terms that the criminals who were supposed to have turned State's evidence should not have their identity revealed, but he finally conceded the point.

The radical element of the public, however, were loud in criticism of this blind following of an indicted man. Some radical papers even hinted that Priestley had guilty knowledge of the original thefts. To the day of his death, my old friend suffered from this suspicion but refused to let me write the truth in his vindication as long as he or the other principals in this secret episode were alive.

He was soon cleared of the technical charge against him, however. When it became apparent that Fleckner would be a very sick man mentally and physically for many weeks to come, Priestley's counsel consented to go to trial without his testimony. The evidence of the rest of us proved sufficient and Priestley was acquitted. It was ruled, that the long distance method he used for getting his cousin's signature to the release of his fortune was valid and the telephonoscope was thus given a definite standing under the law.

CHAPTER XXX

Treasures Revealed

BUT all this time the mystery that had baffled us so long, the puzzle that had unseated Fleckner's reason, remained as much a mystery as ever. We were no nearer than ever to locating the hidden wealth of the crime trust. For that matter the second collection of loot gathered and hidden by Fleckner himself, during the months of his régime, proved as elusive.

Our earthly Treasures of Tantalus were still as much out of our reach as that mysterious treasure of the star Tantalus a thousand light years away.

Between us and those great stores of hidden wealth were the disordered minds of two sick men, Chandler and Fleckner.

For the ex-President-elect was still pitifully weak, though convalescing, and common humanity forbade our applying threats to him in the hope of getting a clue to the funds of his old organization.

As for Professor Fleckner, he had occasional lucid intervals, as he gradually grew stronger in body, but all inquiry regarding his secrets at such times threw him into a fury which resulted in a relapse into irrationality. So Ruth Stimson, who continued to care for him as tenderly as though he were her father, finally forbade our troubling him further.

The old man grew very fond of her and never wanted her out of his sight. One night, after he had been restless and almost violent at times, he settled down at last for a fitful sleep, muttering deliriously now and then.

"Ruth! Ruth!" he whispered suddenly, half rousing.

She bent over him solicitously.

"Yes. What is it?"

"I can't keep it from you any longer. You've been so good to me. It's under the old mill race near where the treasure van was lost that time. It's all yours."

Then he fell into the first natural sleep he had enjoyed since his attack.

The reader will recall that Fleckner's two men, John and James, had, according to his statement when he first boasted to us of his stealing of the treasure van, assisted in hiding that loot. Afterwards he had evidently arranged with another agent by way of the telephonoscope. But John and James had departed for parts unknown the moment the Professor collapsed that day, so we got no chance to quiz them.

However, they did not seem to have dared touch any of the treasure, for Priestley's agents found it intact where Fleckner in his delirium indicated, and it was presently back in its home vaults.

That left the big mystery of the original treasure to solve. There was also the problem of what should be the future of the telephonoscope, which had proven itself such a dangerous implement. Professor Fleckner was convalescing now. He had never been irrational again since he unconsciously gave away his secret. He was still confined to his bed and was gentle and affectionate with Ruth Stimson but cold and uncommunicative toward us. He was evidently unrepentant. He did not know yet that his treasure had been restored to its owners and he still discussed his schemes with Miss Stimson for finding the crime trust loot, alternating this with speculation as to what was finally accomplished by the three sons of Olanda on Tantalus, the star, and what their mysterious treasure really was.

It was a serious problem, then, as to what would happen if the unrepentant Fleckner continued to use his invention against the privacy of the world. There was no law to prevent his so using it if he chose, though now that his invention was known, he could

no longer employ it for criminal purposes. On the other hand, if he turned it over to general use, what mischief might not be done with it by an irresponsible public?

We were discussing these vexatious problems in the laboratory one evening, Priestley, Ruth Stimson and I. It had been a light day on the paper and I was off early. Professor Fleckner was asleep and Ruth had tiptoed out of his room and joined us.

Priestley had turned the telephonoscope on Chandler's home earlier in the evening and found him much improved in health. He was alone in the house with two nurses and his servants. It was generally known that relations between him and his family had become strained since his breakdown had lost him his political honors. Mrs. Chandler was a cold, selfish woman and their children shared her disposition.

Priestley was inclined to regard this as just retribution for his sins, but Ruth was warmly sympathetic. I recalled her strange visit to Chandler's home that time when she had procured Priestley's release by impersonating the President-elect. I also remembered the night when she warned Chandler away from the van when we were about to trace him to his treasure-trove. I wondered what had been her relations to the Chandler household and again recalled my vague suspicion that she might once have been a member of the crime trust herself.

Priestley was arguing that now was the time to appear before Chandler and compel him to give up the secret of the treasure, or, if he was telling the truth about a man still higher up, to force from him some clue by which we might locate that person.

"No!" Ruth demurred vehemently. "It isn't the best way to force people to do right. Better to persuade them. My woman's intuition tells me that there is no man higher up, that he really knows where the treasure is and would like to get it off his soul. I'm going to try it."

Wonderingly we watched her go to the telephonoscope board and throw on one of the lesser rays that had not been tuned up for the long distance work on the star Tantalus. She found Chandler's house and in a moment she revealed him asleep in his bedroom.

Then she threw on the projector and stood in front of it. It was dark in his room, but as you know, our rays were independent of light that the eye can see.

"Are you awake?" she asked gently.

The man in the bed miles away opened his eyes and stared unseeing into the darkness.

"Who's there?" he cried out.

"It is I. Don't be alarmed. I want to talk to you," she replied.

"Agnes!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Where are you? Am I asleep? Oh, I've wanted you so much lately since they've left me alone. Oh, I loved you after all. Have you forgiven me at last and come back? It can't be! I'm dreaming!"

"No, you are not dreaming," the girl answered with a little catch in her voice. "But I'm not Agnes. Agnes has been dead ten long years. I'm Agnes's daughter and your daughter, Ruth."

Priestley and I started violently and stared at her in amazement.

"You are Ruth? Agnes is dead?" the sick man was saying. "How did you get in? Where have you been all these years? Turn the light on so I can see you! You were a little thing a year old when I left your mother. Turn the light on so I can see you."

"No," she answered. "You can't have a light now. The nurse has forbidden it. You can see me in the morning, if you tell me what I want to know."

"What must I tell you?" he asked tensely.

"That you are sorry for the wrong you've done in the world and are ready to give back the money you stole."

"You know about that!" he gasped.

"Everything," she said, "except where the money is. I want to help you give it back."

He was silent for a long time.

"Will you tell me?" she prompted.

"I can't give it back," he answered at length, "but I can tell you where it is. It is at the bottom of the deepest part of the Pacific Ocean, ten miles below the surface."

Again Priestley and I gasped.

"I never wanted the money," the sick man explained. "I wanted only the power, I didn't dare use the money or let any one else use it for fear it would be traced. So I invented a counterfeiting scheme to pay my followers. Then I was afraid to hide the money anywhere for fear it would be found. I had to keep ordering robberies to satisfy my followers, but the money worried me. So I took it each time in a big seaplane, flew out over the ocean and dumped it where it would never betray me. That's all. I find I'm very weak still. I can't talk any more."

"I'll come to you in the morning," she promised and threw off the ray. She was weeping when she turned on us.

"Now you know my secret," she said, without waiting for our questions. "He divorced my mother when I was a baby, to marry this other woman. His marriage to mother was a secret one. She wasn't in society and he grew ashamed of her. But she continued to love him. When I was a little girl she used to bring me secretly to his house and leave me with his housekeeper so I could see my father. I came to love him, wicked as I knew he was. I'm going to him in the morning. He needs me. I'm going to my room now. I want to cry alone."

She hurried out, tears streaming from under the green eyeshade.

Not till that moment did we see Professor Fleckner. He stood in his bedroom door, a gaunt figure in a flowing bathrobe. He was smiling sardonically.

"So," he said, "the Treasure of Tantalus has been located under ten miles of sea-water!"

Evidently he had been standing and listening for some time. We made no answer.

"Well," he went on, "it's a pity to lose all that money. Chandler was an awful fool. But there's more where that came from.

"Meanwhile, I'm going to satisfy my curiosity as to that other mysterious treasure that made so much trouble on our star, Tantalus a thousand years ago. I'm feeling pretty fit to-night. I've thought up a way of giving that No. 1 ray a little more speed. I'm going to have another look at Tantalus. I recalled a little while ago where old Olanda told her enterprising sons to look for their treasure. You two were so busy at the moment watching the young Olanda that you missed it."

He made a rapid adjustment of the instrument and flashed on the ray. It was still under control of

the interstellar current and instantly the great cave on Tantalus was on our screen once more.

But now it was a scene of absolute desolation. Not a sign of human life. The houses were broken, empty wrecks.

Fleckner was a little taken aback at this.

"I expected to see the valley flourishing again," he said.

He drove the ray along the river to the great ravine and up to a point where he picked out back of some bushes the low entrance to a cave.

"Here's where she told me to look," he said, sending his ray into the opening.

A little way in, the passage opened into a cave of considerable size.

Near together in the center of the cave, lay three skeletons. Their torn robes and the heavy gold clubs told the story of a death battle long ago. A band of gold, jewel-studded, around the crown of each grinning skull identified the remains of the three sons of Olanda.

A little apart from the other two lay the skeleton crowned with the diamond-studded band, once the oldest and strongest of the three sons of Olanda. He lay with his arms thrust into a little pile of rusty nuggets, the mysterious treasure-trove at last.

Professor Fleckner turned on his analyzer, did a little figuring on a pad and without a word showed us the result. It was the climax of absurdity in the midst of this scene of tragic desolation.

The Treasure of Tantalus was ordinary everyday iron ore!

Fleckner left his gruesome picture on the screen and fell to pacing the floor with slow, rather uncertain steps. At length he stopped and gazed at us intently.

"So iron was the treasure beyond price in a land where gold and jewels were common dirt! What is treasure anyhow? One says gold. One says iron. The Indian said glass beads. It seems to be anything that a man has so little of that he doesn't dare make any real use of it when he has it. Chandler had a lot of it and it bothered him so that he threw it in the ocean. It makes trouble, any way you look at it. I guess I've been a lot of a fool for the last year or two—a little crazy, I guess. I'm sane again now. Boys, I'm going to undo the trouble I've made, give back the money I've stolen and bust up the crime trust. That finished the business. I'm converted."

He pointed a bony finger at the cave of death.

"I'm going to give the telephonoscope to the world and retire. I've just discovered something out there in Tantalus that will make it safe. People can defend their privacy as well as ever. See that gray spot on the opposite wall of the cave about a foot wide? I flashed the ray into that wall while I was adjusting the ray on the interior of the cave. The ray pierced the wall all around that spot but wouldn't go through it. That spot's ray proof. I analyzed it at the same time that I analyzed that fool treasure there. It's made up of minerals common here. I'll work out the formula in the morning for a ray-proof-paint and you boys can manufacture it along with the telephonoscope. It'll be cheap. Everybody can paint every part of his house with it except a little section where he wants to give and receive telephonoscope messages. So we'll all be happy and private again.

"I'm all in! Good night."

At that the amazing old inventor staggered off to bed.

Priestley and I sat for a time in thoughtful silence. At length he arose hesitantly and approached the screen. He stood and stared for a time at the gruesome picture.

"So that's the end of the story of the Treasure of Tantalus!" he said at last. "I wonder if I couldn't throw the ray power back far enough to see Olanda again and hear her sing once more, before we leave her to rest in her thousand-year-old grave."

He turned to the control-board and swung the ray out of the cave and down the valley to the little dell where we had first seen the singer of Tantalus. But before he could readjust the ray power to throw time back again to the days of Olanda's youth, there was a flash and another girl figure appeared on the screen apparently in the very spot where we had first seen Olanda.

But it was not Olanda. It was one to me far more alluring at that moment than Olanda had ever been. She wore a modern American dress. Her figure was slender and straight; her face was not too perfectly oval, but fine, sweet and sincere. Over it was a mass of wavy brown hair. And above all else was the glory of her eyes.

And dangling from one capable little hand was a big green eyeshade.

We both stared at her for a moment before I saw that Priestley still failed to recognize her.

"It's Ruth!" I exclaimed. "She's thrown her image on the screen from the little telephonoscope in her room."

"Ruth!" he exclaimed. "Why, Ruth! I don't believe I ever really saw your face before!"

She was looking into his with a light in her eyes that shines for only one man in the world. And from where I stood I could catch a little of the expression of his.

I turned and tiptoed out of the room with an ache in my heart that wasn't entirely cured until I met the lady who is sitting placidly beside me at this moment, while I write these lines.

For I knew when I saw the answering light in Priestley's eyes that he had found his Treasure of Tantalus at last.

THE END

The MACHINE MAN of ARDATHIA

by Francis Flagg

. . . I was conscious of being scooped up and drawn forward with inconceivable speed. For one breathless moment I hung suspended. . . .

I DO not know what to believe. Sometimes I am positive I dreamed it all. But then there is the matter of the heavy rocker. That undeniably did disappear. Perhaps someone played a trick on me. But who would stoop to a deception so bizarre, merely for the purpose of befuddling the wits of an old man? Perhaps someone stole the rocker. But why should anyone steal the rocker? It was, it is true, a sturdy piece of furniture, but hardly valuable enough to excite the cupidity of a thief. Besides the rocker was in its place when I sat down in the easy-chair. Of course, I may be lying.

Peters, to whom I was misguided enough to tell everything on the night of its occurrence, wrote the story for his paper, and the editor of "The Chieftain" says as much in his editorial of the 15th, when he remarks that "Mr. Matthews seems to be the possessor of an imagination equal that of an H. G. Wells." And, considering the nature of my story, I am quite ready to forgive him for doubting my veracity.

However, the few friends who know me better think that I had dined a little too wisely or too well, and had been visited with a nightmare.

Hodge suggested that the Jap who cleans my rooms had, for some reason, removed the rocker from its place, and that I merely took its presence for granted when I sat down. The Jap strenuously denies having done so.

I must pause a minute here to explain that I have two rooms and a bath on the third floor of a modern apartment house fronting the Lake. Since my wife's death three years ago I have lived thus, taking my breakfast and lunch at a restaurant, generally taking my dinners at the club. I may as well confess that I have a room rented in a down-town office building where I spend a few hours every day to work on my book, which is designed to be a critical analysis of the fallacies inherent in the Marxian theory of economics embracing at the same time a thorough refutation of Lewis Morgan's "Ancient Society." A rather ambitious undertaking, you will admit, and one not apt to engage the interest of a person given to inventing wild yarns for the purpose of amazing his friends. No; I emphatically deny having invented the story. However, the future will talk for itself. I will merely proceed to put the details of my strange experience on paper, (justice to myself demands that I should do so, so many garbled accounts have appeared in the press), and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

HERE is an astounding fourth-dimensional story, every bit as good as any that we have read in years. What will humanity look like 30,000 years hence? If, since the Egyptians or Romans, we have traveled to our present stage of development in the space of some 2,000 years, how high will the human have ascended in 30,000 years? Our new author has written excellent science into a most unusual and interesting story that can not fail to grip you.

CONTRARY to my usual custom I had dined that evening with Hodge at the Hotel Oaks. Let me emphatically state that while it is well known among his intimates that Hodge carries a flask on his hip, I had absolutely nothing of an intoxicating nature to drink. Hodge will verify this. About eight-thirty I refused an invitation to attend the theatre with him and went to my rooms. There I changed into smoking-jacket and slippers and lit a mild Havana. The rocking-chair was occupying its accustomed place near the center of the sitting-room floor. I remember that clearly because, as usual, I had either to push it aside or step around it, wondering for the thousandth time as I did so why that idiotic Jap persisted in placing it in such an inconvenient spot; and resolving, also for the thousandth time, to speak to him about it. With a note-book and pencil placed on the stand beside me, also a copy of Frederick Engels' "Origin of The Family, Private Property and The State," I turned on the light in my green-shaded reading lamp, switched off all others, and sank with a sigh of relief into the easy-chair. It was my intention to make a few notes from Engels' work relative to plural marriages, showing that he contradicted certain conclusions of Morgan's when he said . . . But there; it is sufficient to state that after a few minutes' work I leaned back in my chair and closed my eyes. I did not doze; I am positive of that. My mind was actively engaged in trying to piece together a sentence that would clearly express my thought.

I can best describe what happened then by saying there was an explosion. It wasn't that exactly; but at the time it seemed to me there must have been an explosion. A blinding flash of light registered with appalling vividness through the closed lids on the retina of my eyes. My first thought was that someone had dynamited the building; my second, that the electric fuses had blown out. It was some time before I could see clearly. When I could . . .

"Good Lord," I whispered weakly, "what's that!"

Occupying the space where the rocking-chair had stood (though I did not notice its absence at the time) was a cylinder of what appeared to be glass standing, I should judge, about five feet high. Encased in this cylinder seemed to be a caricature of a man—or a child. I say caricature because, while the cylinder was all of five feet in height, the being inside of it was hardly three. You can imagine my amazement while I stared at this apparition. After awhile I got up and switched on all the lights to better observe it.

You may be wondering why I did not try to call someone in. I can only say that thought never occurred to me. In spite of my age (I am sixty) my nerves are steady and I am not easily frightened. I walked very carefully around the cylinder and viewed the creature inside from all angles. It was sustained in the center of the cylinder, midway between top and bottom, by what appeared to be an intricate arrangement of glass and metal tubes. These tubes seemed to run at places into the body, and I noticed some sort of dark fluid circulating through the glass tubes. The head was very large and hairless; it had bulging brows, and no ears. The eyes were large, winkless; the nose well defined; but the lower part of the face and mouth ran into the small round body with no sign of a chin. Its legs hung down, skinny, flabby; and the arms were more like short tentacles reaching down from where the head and body came together. The thing was, of course, naked. I drew the easy-chair up to the cylinder and sat down facing it. Several times I stretched out my hand in an effort to touch its sur-

face, but some force prevented my fingers from making the contact; which was very curious. Also, I could detect no movement of the body or limbs of the weird thing inside the glass.

"What I'd like to know," I muttered, "is what you are, where you came from, are you alive, and am I dreaming or am I awake?"

For the first time the creature came to life. One of its tentacle-like hands, holding a metal tube, darted to its mouth. From the tube shot a white streak, which fastened itself to the cylinder.

"Ah," came a clear, metallic voice, "English, Primitive, I perceive; probably of the twentieth century."

The words were uttered with an indescribable intonation; much as if a foreigner were speaking our language. Yet more than that . . . as if he were speaking a language long dead. I don't know why that thought should have occurred to me then. Perhaps . . .

"So you can talk," I exclaimed.

The creature gave a metallic chuckle.

"As you say, I can talk."

"Then tell me what you are."

"I am an Ardathian. A machine Man of Ardathia. And you . . . Tell me, is that really hair on your head?"

"Yes," I replied.

"And those coverings you wear on your body, are they clothes?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"How odd. Then you really are a Primitive; a Prehistoric Man."

The eyes behind the glass shield regarded me intently.

"A pre-historic man!" I exclaimed. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that you are one of that race of early men whose skeletons we have dug up here and there and reconstructed for our schools of biology. Marvelous how our scientists have copied you from some fragments of bone! The small head covered with hair; the beast-like jaw; the abnormally large body and legs; the artificial coverings made of cloth . . . even your language!"

FOR the first time I began to suspect that I was the victim of a hoax. I got up and walked carefully around the cylinder but could detect no outside agency controlling the contraption. Besides, it was absurd to think that anyone would go to all the trouble of constructing such a complicated apparatus as this appeared to be, merely for the sake of a practical joke. Nevertheless, I looked out on the landing. I came back and resumed my seat in front of the cylinder.

"Pardon me," I said, "but you referred to me as belonging to a period much more remote than yours."

"That is correct. If I am not mistaken in my calculations, you are thirty thousand years in the past. What date is this?"

"June 5th, 1926," I replied feebly.

The creature went through some contortions, sorted a few mental tubes with its hands, and then announced in its metallic voice:

"Computed in terms of your method of reckoning, I have travelled back through time exactly twenty-eight thousand years, nine months, three weeks, two days, seven hours, and a certain number of minutes and seconds which it is useless for me to enumerate exactly."

It was at this point that I endeavored to make sure I was wide awake and in full possession of my faculties. I got up, selected a fresh cigar from the humidor, struck a light and began puffing away. After a few puffs I laid it beside the one I had been smoking earlier in the evening. I found it there later. Incontestable proof . . .

I said that I am a man of steady nerves. I am. I sat down in front of the cylinder again determined this time, to find out what I could about the incredible creature within.

"You say you have traveled back through time thousands of years. How is that possible?"

"By verifying time as a fourth dimension and perfecting devices for traveling in it."

"In what manner?"

"I do not know whether I can explain it exactly, in your language, and you are too primitive and unevolved to understand mine. However I shall try. Know then that space is as much a relative thing as time. In itself, aside from its relation to matter, it has no existence. You can neither see nor touch it, yet you move freely in space. Is that clear?"

"It sounds like Einstein's theory."

"Einstein?"

"One of our great scientists and mathematicians," I explained.

"So you have scientists and mathematicians? Wonderful! That bears out what Hoomi says. I must remember to tell . . . However, to resume my explanation. Time is apprehended in the same manner as is space—that is in its relation to matter. When you measure space, you do so by letting your measuring rod leap from point to point of matter. Or, in the case of spanning the void, let us say, from the earth to Venus, you start and end with matter, remarking that between lies so many miles of space. But it is clear that you see and touch no space, merely spanning the distance between two points of matter with the vision or the measuring rod. You do the same when you compute time with the sun or by means of the clock, which I see hanging on the wall there. Time, then, is no more of an abstraction than is space. If it is possible for man to move freely in space, it is possible for him to move freely in time. We Ardathians are beginning to do so."

"But how?"

"I am afraid your limited intelligence could not grasp what I could tell. You must realize that compared to us you are hardly as much as human. When I look at you, I perceive your body is enormously larger than your head. This means that you are dominated by animal passions and that your mental capacity is not very high."

That this weirdly humorous thing inside a glass cylinder should come to such a conclusion regarding me, made me smile.

"If any of my fellow citizens should see you," I replied, "they would consider you—well, absurd."

"That is because they would judge by the only standard they know—themselves. In Ardathia you would be regarded as bestial. In fact, that is exactly how your reconstructed skeletons are regarded. Tell me, is it true that you nourish your bodies by taking food through your mouths into your stomachs?"

"Yes."

"And are at that stage of bodily evolution when

you will eliminate the waste products through the alimentary canal?"

I lowered my head.

"How disgusting."

The unwinking eyes regarded me intently. Then something happened which startled me very much. The creature raised a glass tube to its face. From the end of the tube leaped a purple ray which came through the glass casing and played over the room.

"THERE is no need to be alarmed," said the metallic voice. "I was merely viewing your habitat and making some deductions. Correct me if I am wrong, please. You are an English-speaking man of the twentieth century. You and your kind live in cities and houses. You eat, digest, and reproduce your young, much as do the animals from which you have sprung. You use crude machines and have an elementary understanding of physics and chemistry. Correct me if I am wrong, please."

"You are right to a certain extent," I replied. "But I am not interested in having you tell me what I am. I know that. I wish to know what you are. You claim to have come from some thirty thousand years in the future, but you advance no evidence to support the claim. How do I know you are not a trick, a fake, an hallucination of mine. You say you can move freely in time. How is it you have never come this way before? Tell me something about yourself; I am curious."

"Your questions are well put," replied the voice, "and I shall seek to answer them. Know then, that I am a Machine Man of Ardathia. It is true we are beginning to move in time as well as in space; but note that I say 'beginning.' Our Time Machines are very crude as yet, and I am the first Ardathian to penetrate the past beyond a period of six thousand years. You must realize that a time traveler runs certain hazards. At any place on the road, he may materialize inside of a solid of some sort. In that case, he is almost certain to be blown up or otherwise destroyed. Such was the constant danger until I perfected my enveloping ray of——I cannot name or describe it in your tongue, but if you approach me too closely you will feel its resistance. This ray has the effect of disintegrating and dispersing any body of matter inside of which a time traveler may materialize. Perhaps you were aware of a great light when I appeared in your room? I probably took shape within a body of matter and the ray destroyed it."

"The rocking-chair!" I exclaimed. "It was standing on the spot you now occupy."

"Then it has been reduced to its original atoms. This is a wonderful moment for me. My ray has proved an unqualified success for the second time. It not only removes any hindering matter from about the time-traveler but also creates a void within which he is perfectly safe from harm. But to resume.

"It is hard to believe that we Ardathians evolved from such creatures as you. Our written history does not go back to a time when men nourished themselves by taking food into their stomachs through their mouths, digested it, or reproduced their young in the animal-like fashion in which you do. The earliest men of whom we have any written records were the Bi-Chanics. They lived about fifteen thousand years before our era and were already well along the road of mechanical evolution when their civilization fell. The Bi-Chanics vaporized their food substances and breathed them through the nostril, excreting the waste products of the body through the pores of the skin. Their children were brought to the point of birth in ecto-genetic incubators. There is enough authentic evidence existing to prove that the Bi-Chanics had perfected the use of mechanical hearts and were crudely able to make . . . I cannot find the words to explain just what they made, but it doesn't matter. The point is, that while they had only partly subordinated machinery to their use, they are the earliest race of human beings of whom we possess any real knowledge, and it was their period of time that I was seeking, when I inadvertently came too far and landed in yours."

The metallic voice ceased for a moment and I took advantage of the pause to speak. "I do not know a thing about the Bi-Chanics, or whatever it is you call them," I remarked, "but they were certainly not the first to make mechanical hearts. I remember reading in the paper only several months ago about a Russian scientist who kept a dog alive four hours by means of a gasoline motor which pumped the blood through the dog's body."

"You mean the motor was used as a heart?"

"Exactly."

The Ardathian (for so I will call the creature in the cylinder henceforth) made a quick motion with one of its hands.

"I have made a note of your information; it is very interesting."

"Furthermore," I pursued, "a year or two ago I read an article in one of our current magazines telling how a Vienna surgeon was hatching out rabbits and guinea pigs in ecto-genetic incubators."

The Ardathian made another quick gesture with its hand. I could see that my news excited it.

"Perhaps," I said, not without a feeling of satisfaction (for the casual allusion to myself as hardly human had irked my pride) "perhaps you will find it as interesting to visit the people of five hundred years from now, let us say, as you would to visit the Bi-Chanics."

"I can assure you," replied the metallic voice of the Ardathian, "that if I succeed in returning successfully to Ardathia, those periods will be thoroughly explored. I can only express surprise at your having advanced as far as you have, and wonder why it is you have made no practical use of your knowledge."

"Sometimes I wonder myself," I returned. "But I am very much interested in learning more about yourself and your times. If you would resume your story. . . ."

"With pleasure," replied the Ardathian. "In Ardathia, we do not live in houses or in cities. Neither do we nourish ourselves as do you, or as did the Bi-Chanics. The chemical fluid you see circulating through these tubes which run into and through my body has taken the place of blood. The fluid is produced by the action of a light ray on certain life-giving elements in the air. It is constantly being produced in those tubes under my feet and driven through my body by a mechanism too intricate for me to describe. The same fluid circulates through my body only once, nourishing it and gathering all impurities as it goes. Having completed its revolution, it is dissipated and cast forth by means of an-

other ray which carries it back into the surrounding air. Have you noticed the transparent substance enclosing me?"

"The cylinder of glass, you mean?"

"Glass! What do you mean by glass?"

"Why, that there," I said, pointing at one of the panes of glass in the window.

THE Ardathian directed a metal tube at the spot indicated. A purple streak flashed out, hovered a moment on the pane, and then withdrew.

"No," came the metallic voice, "not that. The cylinder, as you call it, is made of a transparent substance, very strong and practically unbreakable. Nothing can penetrate it but the rays which you see, and the two whose action I have described above, which are invisible. Know then that we Ardathians are not delivered of the flesh; nor are we introduced into incubators as ova taken from female bodies, as were the Bi-Chanics. Among the Ardathians there are no males or females. The cell from which we are to develop is created synthetically. It is fertilized by means of a ray and then put into a cylinder such as you observe surrounding me. As the embryo develops, the various tubes and mechanical devices are introduced into the body by our mechanics and become an integral part of it. When the young Ardathian is born, he does not leave the case in which he has developed. That case—or cylinder, as you call it,—protects him from the action of a hostile environment. If it were to break and expose him to the elements, he would perish miserably. Do you follow me?"

"Not quite," I confessed. "You say that you have evolved from men like us, and then go on to state that you are synthetically conceived and machine made. I do not see how this evolution was possible."

"And you may never understand! Nevertheless, I shall try to explain. Did you not tell me you had wise ones among you who are experimenting with mechanical hearts and ecto-genetic incubators? Tell me, have you not others engaged in tests tending to show that it is the action of environment, and not the passing of time, which accounts for the aging of organisms?"

"Well," I said hesitatingly, "I have heard tell of chicken hearts being kept alive in special containers which protect them from their normal environment."

"Ah," exclaimed the metallic voice, "but Hoomi will be astounded when he learns that such experiments were carried on by pre-historic men fifteen thousand years before the Bi-Chanics! Listen closely, for what you have stated about chicken hearts provides a starting point from which you may be able to follow my explanation of man's evolution from your time to mine. Of the thousands of years separating your day from that of the Bi-Chanics I have no authentic knowledge. My exact knowledge begins with the Bi-Chanics. They were the first among men to realize that man's bodily advancement lay on and through the machine. They perceived that man only became human when he fashioned tools; that the tools increased the length of his arms, the grip of his hands, the strength of his muscles. They observed that with the aid of the machine, man could circle the earth, speak to the planets, gaze intimately at the stars. We will increase our span of life on earth, said the Bi-Chanics, by throwing the protection of the machine, the things that the machine produces, around and into our bodies. This they did, to the best of their ability, and increased their longevity to an average of about two hundred years. Then came the Tri-Namics. More advanced than the Bi-Chanics, they reasoned that old age was caused, not by the passage of time, but by the action of environment on the matter of which men were composed. It is this reasoning which causes the men of your time to experiment with chicken hearts. The Tri-Namics sought to perfect devices for safe-guarding the flesh against the wear and tear of its environment. They made envelopes—cylinders—in which they attempted to bring embryos to birth and to rear children, but they met with only partial success."

"You speak of the Bi-Chanics and of the Tri-Namics," I said, "as if they were two distinct races of people. Yet you imply that the latter evolved from the former. If the Bi-Chanics civilization fell, did any period of time elapse between that fall and the rise of the Tri-Namics? And how did the latter inherit from their predecessors?"

"It is because of your language, which I find very crude and inadequate, that I have not already made that clear," answered the Ardathian. "The Tri-Namics were really a more progressive part of the Bi-Chanics. When I said the civilization of the latter fell, I did not mean what that implies in your language. You must realize that fifteen thousand years in your future, the race of man was, scientifically speaking, making rapid strides. It was not always possible for backward or conservative minds to adjust themselves to new discoveries. Minority groups, composed mostly of the young, forged ahead, made new deductions from old facts, proposed radical changes, entertained new ideas, and finally culminated in what I have alluded to as the Tri-Namics. Inevitably, in the course of time, the Bi-Chanics died off, and conservative methods with them. That is what I meant when I said their civilization fell. In the same fashion did we follow the Tri-Namics. When the latter succeeded in raising children inside the cylinder, they destroyed themselves. Soon all children were born in this manner. In time the fate of the Tri-Namics became that of the Bi-Chanics, leaving behind them the Machine Men of Ardathia, who differed radically from them in bodily structure—so many human nucleii inside of machines—yet none the less their direct descendants."

For the first time, I began to get an inkling of what the Ardathian meant when it alluded to itself as a Machine Man. The appalling story of man's final evolution into a controlling center that directed a mechanical body, awoke something akin to fear in my heart. If it were true, what of the soul, spirit, God. . . .

The metallic voice went on.

"You must not imagine that the early Ardathians possessed a cylinder as invulnerable as the one which protects me. The first envelopes of this nature were made of a pliable substance, which the wear and tear of environment wore out within three centuries. The substance composing the envelope has gradually been improved, perfected, until now it is immune for fifteen hundred years to anything save a powerful explosion or some other major catastrophe."

"Fifteen hundred years!" I exclaimed.

"Barring accident, that is the length of time an Ardathian lives. But to us fifteen hundred years is no longer than a hundred would be to you. Remember, please, that time is relative. Twelve hours of your time is a second of ours, and a year. . . . But suffice it to say that very few Ardathians live out their allotted span. Since we are constantly engaged in hazardous experiments and dangerous expeditions, accidents are many. Thousands of our brave explorers have plunged into the past and never returned. They probably materialized inside solids and were annihilated. But I believe I have finally overcome this danger with my disintegrating ray."

"And how old are you?"

"As you count time, five hundred and seventy years. You must understand that there has been no change in my body since birth. If the cylinder were everlasting, or proof against accident, I should live forever. It is the wearing out, or breaking up of the envelope, which exposes us to the dangerous forces of nature and causes death. Some of our scientists are engaged in trying to perfect means for building up the cylinder as fast as the wear and tear of environment breaks it down; others are seeking to rear embryos to birth with nothing but rays for covering—rays incapable of harming the organism, yet immune to dissipation by environment and incapable of destruction by explosion. So far they have been unsuccessful; but I have every confidence in their ultimate triumph. Then we shall be as immortal as the planet on which we live."

I STARED at the cylinder, at the creature inside the cylinder, at the ceiling, the four walls of the room, and then back again at the cylinder. I pinched the soft flesh of my thigh with my fingers. I was awake all right; there could be no doubt about that.

"Are there any questions you would like to ask?" came the metallic voice.

"Yes," I said at last, half fearfully. "What joy can there be in existence for you? You have no sex; you cannot mate. It seems to me," I hesitated, "it seems to me that no hell could be greater than centuries of living caged alive inside that thing you call an envelope. Now I have full command of my limbs and can go where I please. I can love . . ."

I came to a breathless stop, awed by the lurid light which suddenly gleamed in the winkless eyes.

"Poor pre-historic mammal," came the answer, "how could you, groping in the dawn of human existence, comprehend what is beyond your lowly environment! Compared to you, we are as gods. No longer are our loves and hates the reaction of viscera. Our thoughts, our thinking, our emotions are conditioned, molded to the extent we control the immediate environment. There is no such thing as mind—of the . . . But it is impossible to continue. Your vocabulary is too limited. Your mentality—it is not the word I like to use, but as I have repeatedly said, your language is woefully inadequate—has a restricted range of but a few thousand words. Therefore I cannot explain further. Only the same lack—in a different fashion, of course, and with objects instead of words—hinders the free movements of your limbs. You have command of them, you say. Poor primitive, do you realize how shackled you are with nothing but your hands and feet! You augment them, of course, with a few machines; but they are crude and cumbersome. It is you who are caged alive and not I. I have broken through the walls of your cage; have shaken off its shackles; have gone free. Behold the command I have of my limbs!"

From an extended tube shot a streak of white—like a funnel—whose radius was great enough to encircle my seated body. I was conscious of being scooped up and drawn forward with inconceivable speed. For one breathless moment I hung suspended against the cylinder itself, the winkless eyes not an inch from my own. In that moment I had the sensation of being probed, handled. Several times I was revolved, as a man might twirl a stick. Then I was back in the easy-chair again, white, shaken.

"It is true that I never leave the envelope in which I am encased," continued the metallic voice. "But I have at my command rays which can bring me anything I desire. In Ardathia are machines—machines it would be useless for me to describe to you—with which I can walk, fly, move mountains, delve in the earth, investigate the stars, and loose forces of which you have no conception. Those machines are mechanical parts of my body, extensions of my limbs. I take them off and put them on at will. With their help I can view one continent while busily employed in another. With their help I can make time machines, harness rays, and plunge for thirty thousand years into the past. Let me again illustrate."

The tentacle-like hand of the Ardathian waved a tube. The five foot cylinder glowed with an intense light, spun like a top, and so spinning, dissolved into space. Even as I gaped like one petrified—perhaps twenty seconds elapsed—the cylinder reappeared with the same rapidity. The metallic voice announced:

"I have just been five years into your future."

"My future!" I exclaimed. "How can that be when I have not lived it yet?"

"But of course you have lived it."

I stared, bewildered.

"Could I visit my past if you had not lived your future?"

"I do not understand," I said feebly. "It doesn't seem possible that while I am here, actually, in this room, you should be able to travel ahead in time and find out what I shall be doing in a future I haven't reached yet."

"That is because you are unable to grasp intelligently what time is. Think of it as a dimension—a fourth dimension—which stretches like a road ahead and behind you."

"But even then," I protested, "I could only be at one place at a given time on that road, and not where I am and somewhere else at the same second."

"You are never anywhere at any time," replied the metallic voice, "save always in the past or the future. But I see it is useless to try to acquaint you with a simple truth, thirty thousand years ahead of your ability to understand it. As I said, I traveled five years into your future. Men were wrecking this building."

"Tearing down this place? Nonsense, it was only erected two years ago."

"Nevertheless, they were tearing it down. I sent forth my visual ray to locate you. You were . . ."

"Yes, yes," I queried eagerly.

"In a great room with numerous other men. They were all doing a variety of odd things. There was . . ."

At that moment, a heavy knock was heard on the door of my room.

"WHAT'S the matter, Matthews?" called a loud voice. "What are you talking about all this time? Are you sick?"

I uttered an exclamation of annoyance because I recognized the voice of John Peters, a newspaper man who occupied the apartment next to mine. My first intention was to tell him I was busy, but the next moment I had a better idea. Here was someone to whom I could show the cylinder, and the creature inside of it! someone to bear witness to having seen it besides myself. I hurried to the door and threw it open.

"Quick," I said, grasping him by the arm and hauling him into the room. "What do you think of that?"

"Think of what?" he demanded.

"Why of that there," I began, pointing with a finger, and then stopping short, with my mouth wide open; for on the spot where a few seconds before the cylinder had stood, there was nothing. The envelope and the Ardathian had disappeared.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The material for this manuscript came into my hands in an odd fashion. About a year after the press had ceased printing garbled versions of Matthews' experience, I made the acquaintance of Hodge. I asked him about Matthews: He said:

"Did you know they've put him in an asylum? You didn't? Well they have. He's batty enough now, poor devil. He was always a little queer, I thought. I went to see him the other day, and it gave me quite a shock, you know, to see him in a ward with a lot of other men, all doing something queer. By the way, Peters told me the other day that the apartment house was to be torn down. The City is going to remove several houses along the Lake Shore to widen the boulevard. He says they won't wreck them for three or four years yet. Funny eh? Would you like to see what Matthews wrote about the affair himself?"

I would; and did. And like Matthews, I submit the story to the reading public herewith, and leave it to them to draw their own conclusions.

THE END

A STORY OF THE STONE AGE

By H. G. Wells

(*Continued from page 745*)

whole. The jackals and vultures had tried her and left her;—she was ever a wonderful old woman.

The next day the three men came again and squatted nearer, and Wau-Hau had two rabbits to hold up, and the red-haired man a wood-pigeon, and Ugh-lomi stood before the women and mocked them.

The next day they sat again nearer—without stones or sticks and with the same offerings, and Cat's-skin had a trout. It was rare men caught fish in those days, but Cat's-skin would stand silently in the water for hours and catch them with his hand. And the fourth day Ugh-lomi suffered these three to come to the squatting-place in peace, with the food they had with them. Ugh-lomi ate the trout. Thereafter, for many moons Ugh-lomi was master and had his will in peace. And in the fullness of time he was killed and eaten even as Uya had been slain.

THE END.

Discussions

In this department we shall discuss, every month, topics of interest to readers. The editors invite correspondence on all subjects directly or indirectly related to the stories appearing in this magazine. In case a special personal answer is required, a nominal fee of 25c to cover time and postage is required.

THE JUNE ISSUE OF AMAZING STORIES

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Let me express my appreciation of the June number of AMAZING STORIES. I have too much to say to enclose it in the voting coupon. In regard to the prize stories, I wish to say that I believe the judges' choice to be perfectly in line with my own preference. All three were very good stories. I myself was a candidate for the prizes, and I can well appreciate the fine work which was done.

I have one criticism for Mr. Wates' story. Frankly, I consider such a thing as a substance opaque to gravity impossible. When one considers the matter closely, it becomes utterly preposterous. Obviously a material substance could not be opaque to gravity. The very fact that it is a material substance makes it susceptible and not impervious to gravity. That is the very essence of gravity. All matter is attracted to all other matter, and where there is anything there is gravity. I can conceive of a screen of some sort of ray or ethereal wave through which the action of gravitation cannot function, but a material substance, never! And, furthermore, above a screen opaque to gravity, no matter of what it was constituted, a man could never assume an attitude of suspension. Once gravitation, is removed, he would go flying off into Space, never to return, thrust there by centrifugal force. However, this does not detract from the interest of the story.

And there is another matter of gravity in "The Electronic Wall." I hardly believe that a ship, even the size of the "Woodrow Wilson" would have sufficient gravitational attraction to enable a man to walk comfortably about it. On the other hand, assuming Paulo to be a solid body, the attraction of this body would far overcome the gravity of the ship, unless the electronic wall is opaque to gravitation. In this case, however, the passengers would find themselves in the unpleasant situation of being unable to stay on the ship comfortably, weighing, naturally, only a few grains, or less.

I was unable to find any scientific error in the third story, perhaps because it contains less science than the others.

"The Lost Comet" was very good. "Solander's Radio Tomb," however, has only a very faint hint of scientific taint, and I believe that it has no place in your magazine. To cap the climax, I do not believe that the author intended to put the slightest bit of science into it, other than that necessary to make it comprehensive. Ellis Parker Butler is a fine humorist and writer, but he has no connection with AMAZING STORIES.

"The Four-Dimensional Roller-Press," was a very interesting manuscript, although I fail to see what the age of the inventor had to do with the story. And, although I understand practically nothing of the fourth-dimension, I have always considered it to be time, and, even if it were not, it is clearly a non-material dimension. This being the case, will you kindly explain to me how this fourth-dimensional substance which Sidelburg produced inside his quaint arrangement of spheres could possibly have a material existence? If the creation of such a substance were possible, by a mere mechanical arrangement of spheres, how could a material substance come instantaneously into existence where nothing before existed? And, if it were not a material substance, obviously it would not be perceptible to the touch, as it was set forth to be in the story.

"The Moon Pool" is without question the best story you have yet published. It is written in the

(*continued on page 806*)

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T. O'CONOR SLOANE, A.B., A.M., LL.D., Ph.D.

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I wish to express my appreciation of your prompt reply to my letter and to the recommendation to the General Electric Co. I intend to start the student engineering course at the works. This is somewhat along electrical lines, but the fact that I had a recommendation from a reliable school no doubt had considerable influence in helping me to secure the job.—H. VAN BENTHUYSEN.

So far I've been more than pleased with your course and am still doing nicely. I hope to be your honor graduate this year.—J. M. NORKUS, JR.

I find your course excellent and your instruction, truthfully, the clearest and best assembled I have ever taken, and yours is the fifth one I've studied.—JAMES J. KELLY.

From the time I was having Chemistry it has never been thus explained to me as it is now. I am recommending you highly to my friends, and urging them to become members of such an organization.—CHARLES BENJAMIN

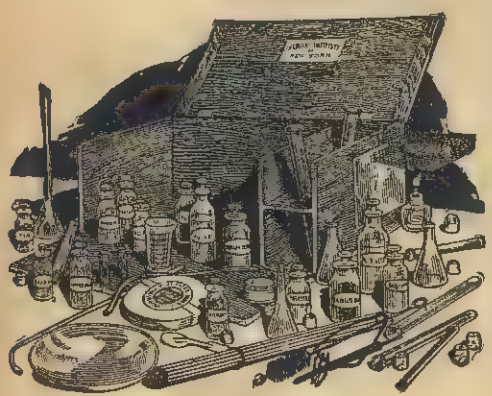
I shall always recommend your school to my friends and let them know how simple your lessons are.—C. J. AMDAHL.

I am more than pleased. You dig right in from the start. I am going to get somewhere with this course. I am so glad that I found you.—A. A. CAMERON.

I use your lessons constantly as I find it more thorough than most text books I can secure.—WM. H. TIBBS

Thanking you for your lessons, which I find not only clear and concise, but wonderfully interesting. I am—ROBT. H. TRAYLOR.

I received employment in the Consolidated Gas Co. I appreciate very much the good service of the school when a recommendation was asked for.—JOS. DECKER.



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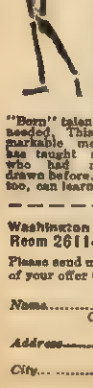

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style of Edgar Rice Burroughs, although it contains far more science than the novels of the latter. The "Tarzan" stories, however, all of which I have read with intense interest, would be fine lessons for those hypocritical legislators who passed anti-evolution bills in Tennessee and Florida.

"The Moon Pool" contains a staggering amount of imagination. In fact, there is so much that I had to reread the first installment before I could begin the second—it seemed so like a new story, always referring to points I did not remember ever having seen before. One thing which it brings out is the true significance of things that we see every day. In regard to the weapons—Mr. Merritt brings out the fact that the revolver is really more effectual than the "Keth." Yet, hearing of the Keth, we would immediately denounce the revolver. And the gravity-nullifying sparks are equalled by modern high-explosives. And is not poison gas unexcelled by any of the weird implements of Muria? We are not as bad off as we are wont to presume.

And I kept looking forward to the appearance of H. G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds." I have always wanted to read this, but for some reason never have.

Thanking you very kindly for the best issue of AMAZING STORIES ever published, I am.

Earle B. Brown,
Newburyport, Mass.

[In Paradise Lost, we are told of the bad angels who in their discussions "found no end in wandering mazes lost." If we discuss the nullification of gravity and the fourth dimension and the possibilities of the beautiful story of The Moon Pool, we will get into the predicament of Milton's characters, yet you evidently agree with the judgment of the editors that these have been very good stories, and we feel that when that can be said of the result of our efforts, we have done well. After all we wish to please our readers, and our correspondent is certainly one of the pleased ones.—EDITOR.]

ANNUAL OR SEMI-ANNUAL

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I just received my copy of the Amazing Stories Annual and in looking it through noticed the coupon in the back. I would like to say that I for one approve of the Amazing Stories Annual and would like to see it published *every six months as a semi-annual,* and I am sure many others feel the same way about it although they may not write and say so. Probably some of them think, "Oh, well, what good will just one more vote do?" but if we all felt that way about it we never would get anywhere. But I'll wager they will all buy the "ANNUAL" if it is published every "*six*" months. I would like to say that I think the ANNUAL would sell better if all the stories in it were new ones that had never been published in AMAZING STORIES before. Several of my friends never bought the ANNUAL because you stated that it was to be a group of the best stories already published in AMAZING STORIES magazine. I am a new reader but I have read the "People of the Pit" and "Under the Knife" in AMAZING STORIES before. I was glad to see the small illustrations scattered through the "Master Mind of Mars" and would like to see them every month in AMAZING STORIES. In the August AMAZING STORIES the stories I liked best were the "Shadow on the Spark," the "Ultra Elixir of Youth" and the "Chemical Magnet." I, like many others, would like to see more interplanetary stories, and also more stories by Edgar Rice Burroughs and Jules Verne.

Yours for a Semi-Annual.

Frank Allen,
Los Angeles, Calif.

[We have received a good many letters about the number of issues of AMAZING STORIES which should come out per annum. A great many desire a semi-monthly publication, while others prefer it as it now is. Recently we published the AMAZING STORIES ANNUAL, giving the best stories of the year already published and some new ones. Now, the question comes up of whether there should be two issues of this publication; in other words, whether we should publish a Semi-Annual, rather than an Annual. We should like to hear from all of our readers about this question, as our desire is, naturally, to please them and to keep them for our friends. And this, with us, is a true sentiment.—EDITOR.]

THE AGE LIMIT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE CLUB

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have been a reader of AMAZING STORIES since the first edition and I have enjoyed them very much, but there has always seemed to be something lacking. That "something" was a Science Club in co-operation with AMAZING STORIES. Mr. Lindgren has hit the idea all right, but why have the age limit at eighteen? You speak of youth being interested in the study of science so why not give them a chance at this club? I should have said "us" because I am one of them as you have probably guessed. I am fifteen myself and in reading Discussions you will see there are several more about that age who would surely be interested in joining. So why not put a lower age limit on the requirements for membership?

Another idea would be to have neighborhood chapters where the members could get together and discuss various topics and maybe outfit a small experimental laboratory and workshop.

Donald L. Campbell,
Chicago, Ill.

[We think you are perfectly right—the age limit for membership of the club should be well under eighteen. In the October issue you will see a portrait of a seven year old devotee of AMAZING STORIES and we firmly believe that he would be a valuable accession to the International Science Club.—EDITOR.]

Readers' Vote of Preference

STORIES I LIKE

(1) .....

Remarks .....

(2) .....

Remarks.....

(3) .....

Remarks.....

STORIES I DO NOT LIKE

(1) .....

Why?.....

(2) .....

Why? .....

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H. G. WELLS UNDER FIRE, BUT ALSO A LOT OF CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

After finishing reading this letter, the reader of it may be inclined to ask me, why I read AMAZING STORIES. My answer would be, "Because I like it." I have read every story in every issue of AMAZING STORIES, since the first issue, and have no intention of missing any in the future, and I am not a magazine reader. AMAZING STORIES is the only magazine I ever did read, and right now, is the only one I have any intention in reading at all regularly. I am telling you this first, because I am going to give you a few of my ideas, in the way of constructive criticism, some of which perhaps will not be very favorable. I wrote you once before and gave you some of the same ideas, and now I am going to do it again. I might remark also that if I did not like AMAZING STORIES I would not bother about writing you and giving you any of my time. I never did it for any other magazine, and never will, until something else, as good, in general as your magazine, comes out.

Your motto is "Extravagant Fiction Today, Cold Fact Tomorrow." An excellent and undoubtedly true motto, but sometimes, I find, your magazine does not stay with it. Every true scientist admits that, anything which is intrinsically possible, no matter how wild and extravagant it may seem, may be cold fact some day, but the scientist, at the same time, also admits that nothing can ever be fact, which, of itself, is impossible. A square circle can never be made. The definition of a Scientifiction Story could be thus stated: a story which depicts the intrinsically possible, but not actually existent, as actually existent. It is obvious that a story which depicts the intrinsically impossible, as actually existent, is an effrontery to the intelligence, for the reason that the human intelligence is so constructed that it refuses to function in the presence of known falsehood. Some things are evidently intrinsically impossible, as the square circle, but others are not so evident, but at the same time, just as impossible, for instance the situation in the story about the lost continent of Atlantis, which I will take up presently. You should carefully guard against allowing such stories to get into your magazine, because they refute your motto, and I have noted quite a number of such instances in various ones.

Now for a few of my objections. As I say above, you sometimes print poor science, in that you allow authors to depict intrinsically impossible situations. In the story about the lost continent, the passengers on the ship view the inhabitants of the lost continent, going far into the past to do so, and THE INHABITANTS look up at the ship, AN INTRINSIC IMPOSSIBILITY. The passengers were viewing that which had taken place, much as an audience in a picture show views what the actors did when the picture was being taken. An action which has been completed can no more be changed than can a circle be squared. When the inhabitants lived, the ship was not there, and so they did not look up at it. Therefore the author has made his characters do something which had already been completed, over again and in another way. That story had no business in your magazine. It was entertaining, it is true, but that makes no difference, it has no place in a scientifiction magazine, as it is merely fiction, not science.

My really most serious objection to your stories, in general, is the lack of imaginative nerve of so many of the authors. There is entirely too much ruthless slaughtering of innocent heroes and heroines, and entirely too much blowing up and losing of valuable new inventions. The authors get to the end of their imaginations, and take the easiest way out. They do not seem to realize that most readers of this class of story are imaginatively inclined themselves, or they would read something else, and being so, the reader can get just as much, if not more enjoyment out of continuing the story in his own imagination, as he did out of the story itself, and this useless slaughter, and unnecessary explosions eliminate this pleasure to the reader. A rare instance of where the author has allowed this privilege to his readers is in the Master Mind of Mars, in your ANNUAL. Neither Valla Dia nor Paxton were unceremoniously removed at the end of the story, as so many great heroes and heroines are, but are allowed to remain happily wedded on Mars. The reader is permitted by the author to change his own name to Paxton, and have a grand time, carrying on, in his own imagination, his own elevation, through deeds of prowess, to the Lordship of Mars, and the beautiful results of Valla Dia's rise with him, to be the Queen of Mars, or any other flight of the imagination to which the turn of mind of the particular reader may direct him. The Master Mind of Mars is well on in its sequel in my imagination, and I am having as much pleasure out of my own sequel as I did out of the story itself. "A Columbus of Space," offered the same, if not even better possibilities for the reader's imagination, but the author would have none of it, finding it necessary, in the temerity of his own imagination, to dispose of his wonderful hero and heroine, by letting them get caught in nothing but a common fire, when they had already escaped many more dangerous situations, thereby denying the reader the enjoyment of imagining his own sequel. That author simply lost his nerve. The same way, why always blow up wonderful new inventions after barely allowing the inventor to show what he has? Why not let the reader continue with it, if the author does not want to go on with it? Lots of readers could have a wonderful

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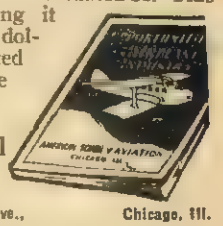

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by

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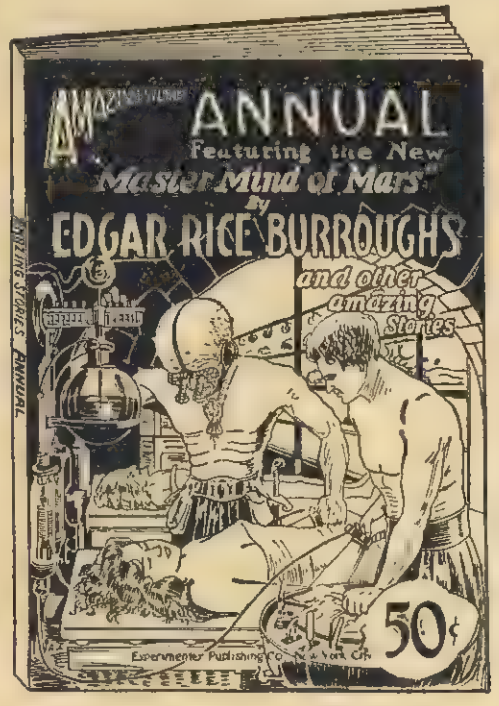
the first printing of this new marvelous story



EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS has written many interesting stories, but we believe, for downright originality and exciting interest, "The Master Mind of Mars" is hard to equal. There is hardly a page that does not hold your interest. Once the story gets under way, hair-raising episodes seem to tumble right over each other—they come so quickly.

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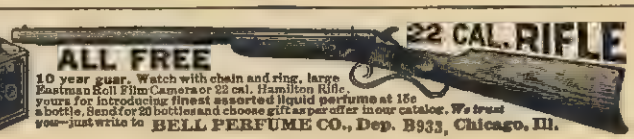

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A VERY BREEZY CRITICISM

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

No doubt we could think of a great many extremely flattering and complimentary remarks to make about your magazine, but inasmuch as everyone else has made them repeatedly, we shall instead devote our letter to a few criticisms and suggestions.

To begin with, why in —Hades— do you insist on printing those detestable, boring, out-of-place, and otherwise obnoxious detective stories, called Amazing merely because they include a short paragraph or so explaining the marvelous and complicated mechanism of the spyrogyroheliospermatograph or something of similar nature, stories which by no conceivable line of reason can be called up to the standard of most of the others?

Kick No. 2: And when we say "others" we emphatically exclude painfully humorous atrocities as "Solanders Radio Tomb," "Doctor Fosdick," "Hick's Inventions with a Kick" (a big kick), and others of their ilk.

No. 3: Our aesthetic tendencies are extremely excited—or rather, pained by certain of your illustrations: all except those by Mr. Paul, whose pictures are for the most part excellent.

If you have read this far without tearing this epistle into myriad shreds, we would like to suggest:

First, another cover contest.
Second, if possible, more new stories.
Third, semi-monthly "as-is" publication.
Fourth, less detective stories.
Fifth, less detective stories.
Sixth, less detective stories, etc.

—But on the whole, we appreciate the difficulties under which you are laboring, and in spite of its few and unfavorable defects, we will continue our yearly and monthly stipends, respectively. We consider it rather improbable that you have read this far, and practically inconceivable that you will print a contribution so apparently deprecatory. (We really didn't mean to sound so heartless.)

Paul L. Stanchfield,
Robert D. Swisher,
Ann Arbor, Mich.

[This is the kind of letter which we are sure will meet with the approval of our Flagstaff correspondent, or rather its publication will receive his commendation. All we can say in answer to the criticism is that the detective stories have met very wide approval; that the stories where science is made to contribute to the gaiety of nations delight many, and we are sure that Mr. Paul will be greatly delighted to read the third kick. We shall take care that he sees it. We find that your presumably scolding letter simply radiates good humor—EDITOR.]

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Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Whether he did read your magazine or not, the gentleman who is the cause of the enclosed clipping is surely a "find" for your side of the case. To have the same thing occur in everyday life that had been foretold by your author in the story about "Jones' Dollar" is a "strike" for your score. I am sure the gentleman was inspired by your author, if not, heap on the more olive leaves on his noble brow.

Who said the amazing things in AMAZING STORIES cannot become realities?

I am a reader of your magazine since the first number and as I have a right to note thumbs up or down about my choice all I will say is that always you will find "two bits" in my pocket when I see a fresh copy on the newsstand.

And as to praising or knocking your work, I know all the people cannot be satisfied. If each man had his way we all would be Sultans in a world wide harem.

But joking aside—

I like your magazine and will always purchase it.

As to pictures, science, proof, merit, serials and other things argued over by people over your articles, all I say is that it is your business. That is what you are being paid for, so you know 'cause I don't.

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John Bull,
Holland, Mich.

[We wish to thank this correspondent for the clipping. If he will get a table of logarithms and calculate the amount that the one dollar bill will produce in five hundred years at compound interest, he will be amazed at the result. We hope that he will always have the "two bits" in his pocket. Suppose he takes it out of the one dollar investment of the Michigan man.—EDITOR.]

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time using some of the inventions, in the world of their own imaginations. Just consider "The Man Who Could Vanish." I have certainly had a great time in the world of my imagination, vanishing, but darn the objector in that story. He had no sense of humor. I have ridden into town many a time in my car, the car being apparently without a driver; I have paid for my gas with money appearing out of thin air; I have been a marvelous magician; I have used it in games such as football, throwing an invisible pass into the waiting arms of an end down between my own goal posts. Gosh but Doc Unsin was a nut to let the thing alone, and his friend needed a good swift kick. He was just an old grouch. For the Lord's sake, let the heroes and heroines live in the end and be happy. They have a hard enough life so that they deserve happiness in the end, and let the inventions go on in the world of the imagination. It cannot hurt anyone, other than the possible overworking of the imagination of the author, and it may give great pleasure to those able to build their own sequels.

Another of my objections is that so many of the stories are strung out, apparently with the only purpose of making them long. *The War of the Worlds*, is a good one in point. The first installment was good, but the second, in this month's issue, was awfully dry. The experiences of "my brother," could just as well have been told in one paragraph, including the exodus of the people. The reader of this story did not give two whoops about "my brother," or the exodus of the people other than just the fact that they lit out. What the reader wanted to know was what were the Martians like, and what were they doing. Had this story been but the first installment, plus about three pages, it would have been fairly good, but as it is, it got to be an awful bore. While I am on this story, just a few of my impressions while I was reading it. Mr Wells certainly commands a punk army. His cannoneers could not hit the broad side of a barn. His guns were efficient enough to be effective, for one did accidentally hit a Martian and knock him out, but at very close range. The Martians fought in 100 foot towers, and Mr. Wells' gunners got a great number of shots at them, mostly from a range of about 1000 yards. Gosh, give an American gun crew one good six inch gun, and the chances that Mr. Wells' army had and they could clean out the Martians in short order. Men in this story are certainly depicted as a lot of ignoramuses, and ought to be wiped out. What were the men doing with the nine spheres, after the first one lit and men found out what was in them? Why did they not blow them up? Mr. Wells does not relate that the first ones protected the second and later arrivals. How greatly would it have improved this story, if, in the end men had figured out the Martians' susceptibility to disease and fed them the germs, instead of just letting them acquire them naturally. The men would have won a great battle against great odds, while as it was, they just got off lucky, without using any inventiveness or human intelligence. I would certainly hate to think that the United States army would light out and be incapable of fighting no more formidable foe than as Mr. Wells depicts the Martians. Mr. Wells certainly drew on his imagination when he conscripted his army, not constructively, but just the opposite. His army was not half as good as armies which actually exist right now. Let Mr. Wells' Martians appear in this country today, and how long would they last? Gosh, let's let men, in our imagination at least, have as much intelligence and ingenuity, as they have in actuality. What's the use of imagining if we are going to go the other way.

A suggestion which I would like to make is this. Why not publish the name and address of contributors to your discussions, so that other readers could write them, damning them or commending them, as they wish? I had a letter published in RADIO NEWS once, and got a flood of letters on account of it, one from as far as Finland, and I may assure you that I consider myself well paid for the trouble of writing that letter, as it has led to friendships which could not have been brought about in any other way.

Another suggestion. Occasionally publish a letter which candidly and openly gives your magazine the royal razz; publish the name and address of the writer; let the editor refrain from comment to the effect that the writer is wrong and let the readers hop on him. You may be assured that we will do it, and with a vengeance. Let's start a real discussion and let the editor keep out of it. Lots of us readers are somewhat of scientists ourselves, and we do not need the editor to put us right. If there is not space in the magazine to punish it, publish names and addresses and let us have our arguments in private. We will enjoy it, and learn a lot through it.

I like your magazine, and wish to add my name to those who want it twice a month. It takes me about a week to finish it and then there is nothing to do but go to bed early for the other three. If you put it out weekly, I will read it weekly. Let those who object to its coming twice a month on the ground that too much of a good thing spoils it, read it only once a month. They are welcome. There are things I do not like about it; stories which I do not like, but you cannot be expected to please everyone; in my opinion, you sometimes allow poor science to creep in; you print dry, uninteresting stories sometimes, your authors often are not courageous imaginers, and rob us of the pleasures of our own sequels; they kill the heroes, destroy forever wonderful inventions, with many other faults, but the fact remains that I read your magazine, religiously, and intend to continue doing so, and want it oftener, which

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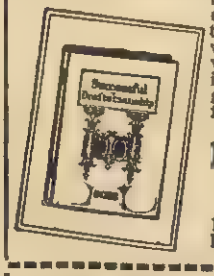

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speaks for itself. I often feel that I could write a really good story for the magazine, but then I read the discussions and realize that if I were to try it, it would have the fate of others; some would like it, and some would not. I have no doubt that many, many of your readers think the same of themselves. They would write the way their turn of mind directs, and I mine, while it is your task to please everyone, and this, in my opinion, you are doing admirably.

A. M. Riordan,
Flagstaff, Arizona.

[This we regard as a most interesting letter, as the writer certainly gives truly constructive criticism, which we are always delighted to receive, and puts it into very picturesque language. The stories must be interesting, and even if something that seems impossible is described, the author has at least the excuse, and an old time one it is now, that the impossible has over and over again proved to be possible. The Einstein theory is now widely accepted, and if by following it out, the Lorenz-Fitzgerald contraction is taken as possible, a lot of the most curious conclusions will follow. We firmly believe that if, before the Einstein theory was promulgated, a story had been written including all its features, bringing them down to the concrete, making full use of the fourth dimension as a reading topic, it would have been pronounced by most readers quite preposterous. We enjoy writing comments on our correspondent's letters, but this one is so good and suggestive that it speaks for itself. However, we must refer to one of its suggestions. We are asked to publish, occasionally, a letter "which candidly and openly gives your magazine the royal razz." This we have done in the past and shall continue to do in the future. These unfavorable letters, or "Brickbats" as they are sometimes called, will, we are sure, reach us in abundance and we will publish them. In this issue, will be seen the totally opposite views entertained by our readers on identical stories such as "The Colour Out of Space," and strangely enough about the writings of H. G. Wells, one of the most esteemed authors of the present day.—EDITOR.]

H. G. WELLS AND HIS STORIES

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

No need to say, I suppose, that I AM an interested reader of your excellent publication, AMAZING STORIES, and have been since the first copy appeared on the stands.

A number of times I've been on the verge of taking advantage of your published invitation to make myself heard in regard to my opinions of stories you've printed. However, I've always come to the decision to keep still and let others do the talking.

I've enjoyed most of the yarns AMAZING STORIES has given the public so far. I'll frankly say the majority of them have been well told by the different authors, and with the exception of a single one ("The Malignant Entity"), they've all been new to me. I'm not of a scientific turn of mind, or even of mechanical inclination, but I believe that, like the majority of us, I too, have my share of imagination. I appreciate a good story well told, and that's THAT!!

I haven't so far attached myself to any one author who writes for AMAZING STORIES—that is, made a favorite of him. Most of them seem to be good. However, I AM beginning to tire of one of them. That particular ONE is H. G. WELLS. I've seen only one story by this author which has been able to hold my interest: "The Time Machine." The rest of the stuff he has given us has been, I believe, but mediocre reading. There is no snap, no life to his stories. Take, for instance, that last story of his you've given us: "The War of the Worlds." Honestly, this is the rankest, poorest, would-be yarn I've ever laid eyes on. What's it all about anyway? What's he trying to tell, and WHY? He uses a MULTITUDE of meaningless words and phrases, brewing out of them the sleepiest sort of "QUATCH," and gets nowhere. How does a writer rated as high as you rate, Mr. Wells, get that way anyhow?

I don't mean to do Mr. Wells any sort of injustice with a criticism like this, BUT I surely DO agree with Mr. Fred W. Fisher, Jr., of Knoxville, Tenn., in saying that this particular story, "The War of The Worlds," is ROTTEN! And I agree with him as to the reason WHY it's rotten. To wit, ". . . he is always having one of his characters come out of his story to scratch his chin or tug his whiskers, or expectorate, or something," and ". . . all of his tales are generally disconnected." I'll say they are, Mr. Editor, and also Mr. Fisher. He gives one the impression of an amateur trying to raise a tempest in a teapot; in other words "Much Ado About Nothing."

I read this "Story" through after seeing Mr. Fisher's criticism under "Discussions" of the August issue, and your defense of Mr. Wells, and I second Mr. Fisher's request not to reprint H. G. Wells' stories, unless he comes across with something worth while. In my opinion, "The War of the Worlds" can easily be boiled down to two or three, at the most four pages, for all the science or fiction it contains, because the rest of it is just plain waste of space, and very markedly negatives any of that "realistic touch" which it might otherwise contain.

I want to say in conclusion that Jules Verne's "Off On a Comet" was very good. Here's a writer who, no matter how he draws out his story, still is able to hold one's interest and attention; and I'm not saying this because I'm unduly prejudiced against Mr. Wells and favor Verne in particular. "Station X" was good; "The Second

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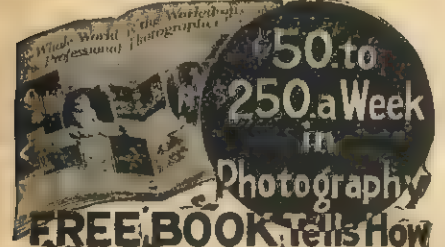

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Deluge," "The Lost World," "A Columbus of Space," "The Moon Pool," "The Master Mind of Mars" and some others I can't recall, certainly were masterpieces. Give us more stories like these; they are not only interesting as fiction but the science they contain is easily digestible.

I'd like to see AMAZING STORIES twice a month, but certainly not if you can't give us anything better than "The War of the Worlds." Illustrations by Paul are very good, but don't crowd out any interesting reading matter for the sake of a few sketches. Wishing AMAZING STORIES a long and prosperous life. S. Francis Koblischke,
Chicago, Ill.

[The work of the distinguished author, H. G. Wells, fails to impress some of our readers. The curious feature of Mr. Wells' work is, that it has an enormous acceptance by the reading public and so high is the degree of approval awarded him that we feel that his very name carries weight. One can criticize "Paradise Lost." There is a fault in prosody in the first line, but John Milton shows, in his epic, the veritable glories of the English language. So do not be too hard on Mr. Wells.—EDITOR.]

ABOUT SOME OF OUR AUTHORS

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Having been one of your constant readers from the first issue, I'll take the liberty to write you a few of my ideas regarding your good magazine.

I am a lover of good scientifiction. I especially like interplanetary stories of all the different worlds and distant universes. I would be glad for you to give us more of these kind of stories. And while on this subject, let me ask you, why don't you publish some of the stories written by Homer Eon Flint? I have read several of his planetary stories, and all of them I enjoyed reading. I remember in particular one of his stories that I liked very much, "The Planeteer." This story was published several years ago in another magazine. (In "Argosy" or "All-Story Magazine" about 1917 or 1918.) I would enjoy reading this story again, and also some of his other stories. Can you print this story and any of his others?

Of the stories you have printed, some of my favorite authors are A. Merritt, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Garrett P. Serviss, and a few by H. G. Wells. The trouble with Wells in some of his stories is he uses too many words in describing a situation, and it becomes tiresome. However, some of his stories are very good, and his science is usually good. I consider "Station X" one of your best stories. And as for your comedy stories, I consider your magazine is no place for them. None of them are interesting, and I think most of your readers will agree with me. It will please me if you will leave them out of your magazine entirely. And I have a suggestion to make you and Mr. A. Merritt. You have stated that Mr. Merritt will give us a sequel to his story, "The Face in the Abyss." Why can't he combine this sequel with another of his stories, "The Moon Pool?" That was an excellent story, and deserves a sequel. Mr. Merritt could easily put the characters of these two stories together into one real good sequel, covering both stories. Both stories are somewhat similar in their texture, science and general settings. Will you take this up with Mr. Merritt?

With best wishes for the success of your magazine, and hoping to see this letter printed in your next issue and with your answers to my above questions.
Charles Knight,
Little Rock, Ark.

[We are sure that this letter will be read by our authors with much interest, and we will take pleasure in taking up your suggestion with Mr. Merritt.—EDITOR.]

CLIMATE IN REMOTE GEOLOGIC AGES—THE MORALITY OF THE MARTIANS

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

In the first place I wish to say how much pleasure I derive from reading AMAZING STORIES. You could not have chosen a better title, for amazing they are. Some of them I read some years ago. "The Second Deluge" was very good, but others like "The Land That Time Forgot" is a great strain on the imagination, for I should say it was an utter impossibility for types of fauna and flora of Palaeozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic, to be living at the same time. I should say that atmospheric conditions of the Mesozoic period was unfit for life of the Cenozic to exist in. Life of the Pliocene time to be in existence with the Jurassic, doesn't sound feasible. Again as regards the astronomical writers. Why do they always give poor little Mars such a bad time? Simply because the planet is reddish in tint doesn't necessarily mean it is of a sanguinary disposition, which all fiction in regard to it seems to suggest. The presumption is that being a much older planet than the Earth it is by thousands of years more civilized, if life exists at all. Take Edgar Rice Burroughs' latest brain wave, "Master Mind of Mars," and all his other yarns about Mars. It is nothing but battle, murder and sudden death, besides having the most grotesque forms of life imaginable. There are men of purple, green, yellow and every color of the spectrum, dressed like Roman warriors, with short swords and, Ye Gods! radium guns. Can you beat it? Again, consider "The Man Who Saved the Earth." Once more poor little Mars. She tried to drain the Atlantic Ocean. Then we have H. G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds." This is an old story, but it is good fiction but at the same time highly improbable. I think Mars is a very

(*Continued on page* 814)

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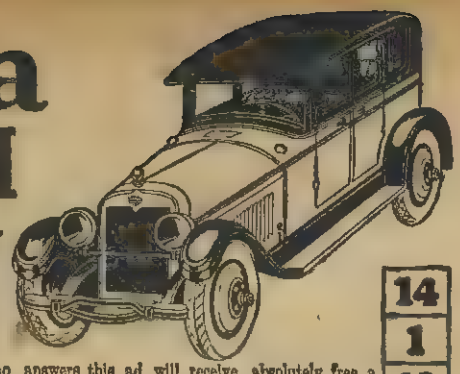

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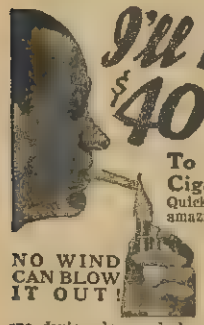

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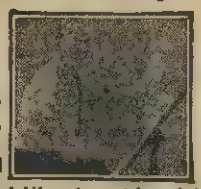

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much maligned planet. If there is a form of high intelligence on Mars I don't suppose for one moment it bears the slightest resemblance to man. Mars, being many millions of years in advance of the Earth has presumably passed beyond the man stage of existence, just as certainly as man will pass from Earth to give place to an infinitely higher form of life, and a beautiful form at that, and not a monstrosity like H. G. Wells would have us believe. In the law of evolution nature never retrogrades, always advances. It may possibly appear to retreat at times but it is for a purpose. She re-advances with renewed energy. I hope this letter has not bored you, Mr. Editor, for I am earnest in my humble efforts, and I certainly do believe in an Almighty Intelligence which stands supreme. This is my faith and my knowledge. Life is continuous and indestructible.

R. L. Morris,
Toronto, Ont.

[It is not safe to differentiate the climates of geologic eras too definitely. Undoubtedly in the carboniferous era conditions were very favorable to vegetable growth, but there was much animal life then and it seems to be going too far to affirm that it was climate alone that controlled and governed the fauna and flora of past epochs in the world's history. We find man living in various climates on the present sphere; the difference between the climate of the arctic zone and of the temperate zone and still more of the torrid zone, is extremely great, yet man lives in all of them. On the coast of Peru, the natives are more frightened at a rainstorm which occurs perhaps once in several years, than they are at an earthquake, which visitations are extremely frequent there. So man, at least, could have endured the climatic conditions of pretty nearly any of the ages you mention. It is hard to say why Mars is "picked upon." We say that nature never retrogrades; is it not fair to say that humanity, devoting its highest science to the development of lethal gases for the next world war and devising other methods of destroying human life "preparing for war times of peace," has been forced to take a retrogressive step?—EDITOR.]

A VERY SHORT AND SHARP CRITICISM OF H. G. WELLS

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

While reading the August number of AMAZING STORIES, I became interested in H. G. Wells' "War of the Worlds." I learned that a shot from a cannon was capable of putting a Martian war machine out of commission, and as later it was found that it was impossible to use cannons why didn't they send out airplanes? Immediately after learning this fact I lost all interest in the story.

S. Kaufman,
New York.

[We suppose that the above letter may be considered a sort of a metaphorical shot from a cannon to knock a very distinguished author from the pedestal on which thousands of admirers have placed him. He may fairly be termed a present-day classic.—EDITOR.]

A CURIOUS MOVEMENT IN FLORIDA—AMAZING STORIES IS A MONTHLY

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Find the enclosed clipping from one of the newspapers. To put it slangily, they are "all wet!" I refer generally to the opposition to H. G. Wells. I think some of his stories are the best that I've ever read. I hope you continue inserting at least one in every issue.

I have procured your ANNUAL and was very well pleased with it. I think such a book as that should be published every six months. I for one would surely be eager to get it. I especially liked "The Master Mind of Mars."

Among the stories that I like best since I have been getting AMAZING STORIES are the following: "The Moon Pool," "The Time Machine," "The War of the Worlds," "The Green Splotches," "The Star of Dead Love." (I hope you put more of Mr. Merritt's work in the coming issues. Mr. Merritt deserves a merit for this story. It was one of the best that you have published.)

When I bought my ANNUAL I also asked for AMAZING STORIES for September and they said that you didn't publish one for September, but that the ANNUAL came out in its place. I think there must be a mistake, isn't there? I got so interested in "The War of the Worlds," and then found that I had such a long wait until the second installment.

I am sixteen years old and have been taking AMAZING STORIES for about nine months. I'm sorry I missed the first issues.

I wish much success to AMAZING STORIES for the future.

H. G. WELLS, FREUD ASSAILED IN FLORIDA

Tallahassee, Fla., Aug. 10 (AP)—Freud, George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells were among the authors included in a list of "indecent, immoral and filthy text and reference books and many rotten fiction books" which a group of deacons of the First Baptist church here told Governor John W. Martin are in use in the libraries of Florida's higher institutions of learning.

The deacons, upon suggestion of Governor Martin, will submit a written report to the State Board of Education at its weekly meeting next Tuesday.

Lester Sodeman,
Toledo, Ohio.

[The clipping, which our correspondent has sent us and which we take pleasure in publishing, is

(*Continued on page 816*)

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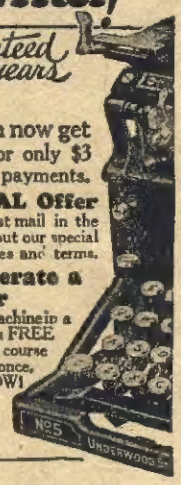

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certainly interesting; the State of Florida cannot undertake to run the universe from the standpoint of literature. AMAZING STORIES comes out every month—your newsdealer was in error. If you did not get your September number, we will be glade to supply you.—EDITOR.]

OUR OCTOBER ISSUE

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I want to tell you my impressions of the October issue of AMAZING STORIES.

Ray Cummings' story, "Around the Universe," was delightful and but for one thing would be great. I mean the feeling the reader gets that the author is laughing at him. Satire is different—it is laughing at every one but yourself. But somehow Mr. Cummings gives me the atmosphere of ridiculing me on every page. You know, a reader is a selfish animal—the author must please him. It's a vague point, though, and the story was good. Incidentally more of the same type will be welcome.

Wells is always the master. I get tired eulogizing him every month.

"The Winged Doom" was great, gigantic, thrilling—again, except for one thing: The atmosphere is nothing more than a reproduction of anti-German propaganda during the war. A scientific story—to be scientific—must be universal. Mr. Gilbert has done the same thing Burroughs did in "The Land that Time Forgot" and Merritt in "The Moon Pool." I wish your authors would cut that out—the Germans (or Mr. Gilbert's unnamed future enemy that resembles the Germans so much) are human beings.

Garret Smith easily takes his place with Burroughs for interest—and is less fantastic. The story so far is good.

There seems to be some attraction to you, Mr. Editor, in a foreign story. In the last issue you had "The Malignant Flower," by Anthers, from Germany—poorly written and an idea too much used. Now you have "The Paradise of the Ice Wilderness," from Norway, which is only better written. (You know I see great store by two things: style and atmosphere.)

Your editorial was interesting, but I take it with a grain of salt; in that I believe a person must have a wide reading and must have thought of scientific and philosophic subjects on his own account in order to understand and appreciate and *be safe from harming himself scientifically.* Do you get me? To be frank, there is harm in your magazine to one who has not the qualifications set out above. Science is not everything and the future is not everything. G. K. Chesterton sets this forth much better than I can in *What's Wrong with the World.*

I'm not going to quit reading AMAZING STORIES just the same.

Abraham Segal,
Philadelphia, Penna.

[An editor is always delighted when he is made the target for a well directed "Brickbat." You will not harm yourself by reading the stories we publish, nor, we believe, will any of our other readers. Everything published by us is fiction, but there is science galore in our pages and our magazine will be found to give a vast amount of scientific instruction. Your letter is thoroughly appreciated, therefore, as an enlightened criticism should always be, whether we agree with the writer or not. We are glad you like the paradoxical Chesterton. We are sure you will never stop reading AMAZING STORIES.—EDITOR.]

A READER IN THE FAR NORTH

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Allow me to compliment you on publishing such a remarkable story, "The Colour Out of Space." It is one of the best I have read in your magazine for a long time.

Although I am only twenty-one, I have been very interested in scientific inventions and supernatural stories for the last ten years. Stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Sax Rhomer and other sensational writers are my favorites, and I have dabbled a little in electrical experiments; unfortunately funds would not allow of my purchasing instruments which I required. In a year or two I hope to be in a position where I can obtain certain instruments with which to experiment.

May I offer a suggestion as to the contents of "Amazing Stories?" Why not have a one-page article every month on the construction of some piece of apparatus, e. g., television, telephotography, etc., giving particulars how to build a cheap yet working instrument. Right at the moment I cannot give you an idea as to the different apparatus which I would like to see described, but if you decide to commence such a series I could give you a list.

Being so far from civilization up here (350 miles north of Edmonton) has a number of disadvantages. If I require books or chemicals or apparatus I need to send outside for them and sometimes have to wait two weeks for them. However, I do not intend to be here very long and when I get down to a city I will start once more on my experiments. It must be four years now since I handled the "junk" of my experimenting apparatus and I look forward to the day when I can devote all my time to some work I have in view.

Wishing you every success,

Wm. H. Macpherson,
Berwyn, Can.

[We have gone nearly to the arctic circle for this great compliment bestowed upon the story entitled, "The Colour Out of Space." We are especially interested in a letter about this story because so many of our readers have expressed so many opinions about it. How happy an editor would be if he could please everybody.

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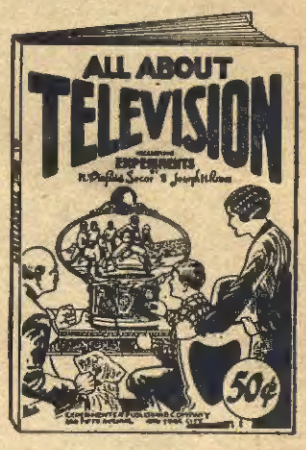

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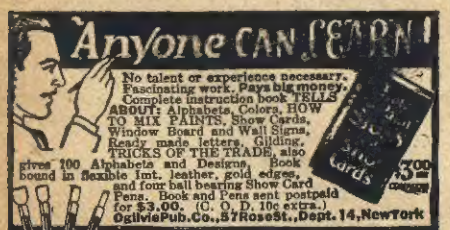
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It is not impossible that your suggestion referring to articles on constructing apparatus might be carried out, but our sister magazine, SCIENCE AND INVENTION covers this field so thoroughly and so well and embodies the work of such distinguished authors, that we feel that there is no need of our trespassing on its territory—EDITOR.]

A YOUNG READER'S GOOD WISHES

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

The object of this letter is to thank you for something I have always desired, and that is a magazine like AMAZING STORIES.

I have been on this earth but fifteen years, but ever since I was old enough to read I have had an unconquerable desire for scientifiction. I soon had read all of Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, E. R. Burroughs, and Edgar A. Poe that treated on such class of fiction, and was just getting to the point where I could find no more, when the first issue of AMAZING STORIES came out. It didn't take me long to discover it and since then I have been a steady reader of your excellent magazine.

I have a very vivid imagination, and for this reason I like highly imaginative stories like "The Moon Pool," "The Land That Time Forgot," "A Columbus of Space," "Station X," "The Visitation," etc. I would like to see more stories by E. R. Burroughs, and some by Ray Cummings.

However, I like the slower type of H. G. Wells and Jules Verne none the less, and I can't agree with M. Fisher, who in the August issue described *The War of the Worlds* as ROTTEN. It is one of my favorite books.

I am in favor of a semi-monthly, and more and better illustrations, but just so long as you keep your good work up to the high standard you have set, I will be more than satisfied.

Thanking you for your kind attention and wishing you every success. Patten Jackson,
Brookline, Mass.

[A good proof of the merit of AMAZING STORIES can be found in the friendship which it has made with younger readers. No magazine is so hard to edit, as one for the younger generation, and really successful ones may be taken as true classics. This indefatigable reader does not agree with one of our critics about *The War of The Worlds.* The old proverb says, "what is one man's meat is another man's poison," and this seems to apply to our stories.—EDITOR.]

OUR SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Being an invalid, for some time at least, I have nothing to do but read, and, as I am a book-worm, I read anything I can find, provided it is scientifically interesting. I have bought "AMAZING STORIES" ever since it first came out and find it far better than any other magazine I have ever read.

I have enjoyed your "Discussions" department very much and would like to offer some comments:

Up to the September issue I have not found much to complain about, but the September issue wasn't what I expected. Most of the stories were all right, but "The Malignant Flower" and "The Colour Out of Space" were not good at all. There was nothing of scientific value in "The Colour Out of Space." It was a good story, but it did not fit the standard of your magazine. It had more of a weird, ghostly trend.

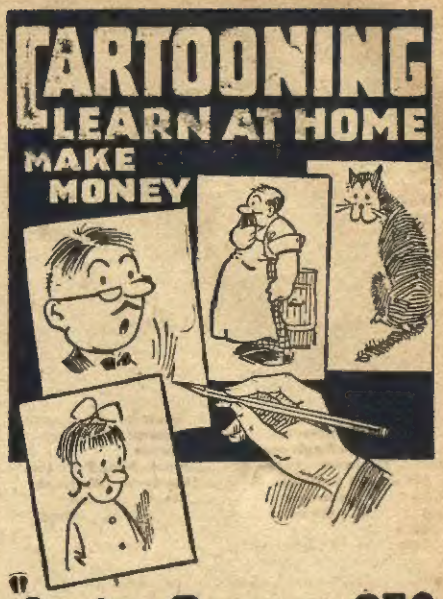
I would like to see Ray Cummings' stories reprinted from SCIENCE AND INVENTION. I noticed an amusing cartoon by Briggs in the Oakland Tribune last night, entitled "Someone is Always Taking the Joy Out of Life." It depicted a man who picked up a magazine and sat down to read it; as he read further his interest was aroused, and in the last picture he was having conniptions because it said "To be continued in the next issue." I have known people to lose interest, and I myself have often lost interest, in a magazine of that sort and have not bought the next issue. I hope this will never be the case with AMAZING STORIES.

I just finished reading E. R. Burroughs' story in the ANNUAL and I consider it a masterpiece. Also "The Face in the Abyss" is very good. I should like very much to see sequels to both of them published soon.

Just one more thing: about the binding. Although it can be laid flat on the table I would sooner hold it open and be sure of having my back numbers whole, with the covers attached; as they are now they are too frail.

Yours for semi-monthlies and semi-annuals.
Gordon W. Richmond,
Richmond, Calif.

[We are glad to feel that AMAZING STORIES has done something to cheer the weary lot of an invalid. Your appreciation is so warmly expressed that it repays us for the many hours of work which must be devoted to such a magazine as ours. As regards the story entitled "The Colour Out of Space," consult the letters about this to see what others think of it. Our personal opinion of "The Malignant Flower" is that it is a particularly fine conception. An elaborate description of the sacrifice of one of the Madagascar women to such a flower forms the opening chapter of a book treating of the Island Continent. Of course it is not published in the book as a true story. Your favorable comment on the ANNUAL, induces us to ask you to consider it a sort of pledge for the future issues of AMAZING STORIES. —EDITOR.]



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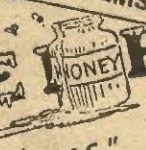

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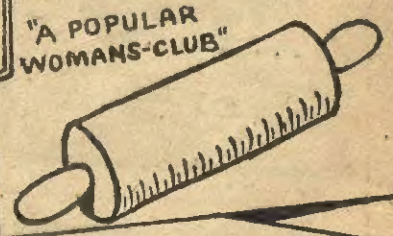

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